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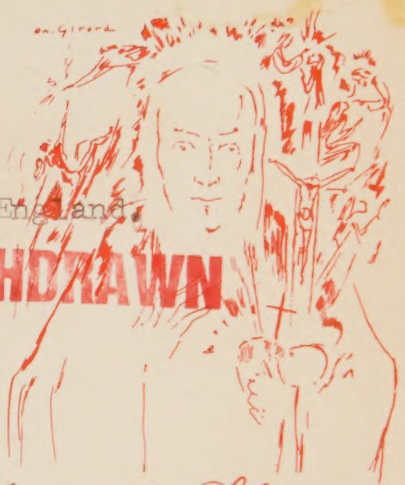

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A HISTORY OF ENGLAND

IN FOUR VOLUMES

A HISTORY OF ENGLAND

BY

HILAIRE BELLOC

VOL. I

PAGAN ENGLAND

CATHOLIC ENGLAND: I. THE DARK AGES

B.C. 55 to A.D. 1066

WITH NINE MAPS

METHUEN & CO. LTD.
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PREFACE

IN this book certain novelties of phrase will be noted which need an apology. The author has used the words "England," "France," indifferently with the words "Gaul" and "Britain," just as the words "Italy," "Germany," "Ireland," "Spain," are used indifferently, whether they apply to antiquity or to modern times.

His reason for doing this is that he believes the separate use of the words "Gaul," "Britain" for antiquity, and of the words "England," "France" for the period succeeding the conversion of Europe to the Catholic faith, is misleading: giving to the reader the impression that England is in some way a new creation unconnected with Roman origins, and the parallel impression that Gaul became something different in essence through the admixture of new Germanic blood.

The truth is, of course, that the main continuity in both cases was unbroken; and that what changed was not a people, but a name.

The author has attempted (what is very difficult) to combine considerable detail of narrative and date with the presence of general theses: as, that religion is the determining force of society; that the inhabitants of this island were never very greatly changed in stock by any invasion; that its institutions derive not from an imaginary barbaric German ancestry, but from known and recorded Roman civilization.

It is impossible, within such limits, and using such a method, to give continual references; but upon the main disputed points he believes he has sufficiently shown upon what authority he relies. He has not any doubt that Fustel de Coulanges permanently destroyed the "Teutonic" legend which warped all academic history in the XIXth Century. He has no doubt that Professor Wiener has permanently established his proofs upon the derivation of innumerable terms of the dark ages from Latin and Greek. Such words as were till recently everywhere affirmed to be originally barbaric, are now known to be no more than degraded idioms of Greece and Rome.

He will proceed upon the same lines in the three volumes which follow.

He will describe, next, in the second volume, the Catholic England of the Middle Ages as Continental in culture and French in the language of its governing classes until the Black Death; from which date may be fixed —and not earlier—the English language.

He will record the Reformation in the third volume as a process beginning with Anne Boleyn's refusal of her person to the King, and certainly not ending until the Dutch Invasion of 1688—only after which date was the large remnant of Catholicism in this country finally stamped out. He will follow the process as, on the political side, essentially a destruction of the monarchy and the gradual rise of an aristocratic government in its place: on the economic, the gradual dispossession of the mass of Englishmen to the profit of a restricted class of owners, and the growth of Capitalism.

In his fourth volume he will deal with the fortunes of aristocracy in England until the partial decline of that

principle in the XIXth Century as a consequence of the very commercial and political greatness which aristocracy had established for England.

He will interrupt and conclude the story at the opening of the South African War, that is, with the close of the XIXth Century.

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PAGAN ENGLAND

The Foundations of England

A HISTORY OF ENGLAND

THE FOUNDATIONS OF ENGLAND

SOCIAL AND GENERAL

THE *Stock* of the English, their blood, has been much the same throughout all recorded time. There has been some influx of new strains, easily absorbed though continuous: Gallic chieftains with their followers; later Italians; German slaves, colonists, and soldiers brought over by the Roman armies; pirates settling on the coasts or along inland rivers, in raids from Denmark and Norway and the mouth of the Elbe: the more numerous French of the Middle Ages. But these—even the French gentry and their households—have always been small in number compared with the total population, and have been reduced at last to the native type.

The *Institutions* of the English—their monarchies and councils, their law, their system of measuring and tilling land, their implements and manner of building and writing, all derive from the Roman Empire, into which they began to be drawn from the first moments of their known history (B.C. 55), and of which, little more than a century later (A.D. 45-49), they became a regular province. The Roman civilization was that of England from her origins. Rome ruled the island directly for 360 years, *c.* A.D. 50 . . . 410, giving it in this long period all the seeds of that culture which it has since retained and developed.

The *Language* of the English has frequently changed.

First it was (probably) a mass of so-called " Celtic " dialects such as survive in Wales, Brittany, Ireland, and Scotland ; but there may have been, even at the origins, some popular German speech on the east and south-east. With the Roman influence came—from, say, 50 B.C. to say A.D. 450—a large admixture of popular and official Latin spoken by traders, some wealthy settlers, many officers, magistrates, and bureaucrats, their clerks and dependants, and spreading as a tongue known to nearly all. During the end of this same period (say from A.D. 250 to A.D. 400), men were imported by the Roman authorities from beyond the North Sea to cultivate the eastern and south-eastern coast lands, and to defend them against pirates. These, mainly Saxons from the mouths of the Elbe and Weser, formed a series of posts from the Wash to Southampton Water, which came at last to be known as " the Saxon Shore," and were commanded by a Roman general[1] and his officers and staff. When civilization entered one of its periodic declines (from, say, 500), the pirates got a footing, and joined these original settlers on the south and east, and between them they planted or extended on those shores what are to-day called " Teutonic " dialects—that is, popular jargons made up of original German words and a great number of debased Latin and even Greek.

Thus there grew up between A.D. 500 (or somewhat earlier) and A.D. 600, a number of little barbaric and pagan courts along all the east and south coasts and up the rivers, from the Forth to Southampton Water. The Midlands and the west were cut off from European civilization, and though in the west (Wales, the Severn valley, Somerset and part of Dorset, Devon, Cornwall) the spread of Christian religion

[1] The word " Roman " does not mean, in this connection, an Italian nor even a born citizen of the Empire. It only means a man appointed to command by the Empire. Such generals, at the time of the " Saxon Shore " (the fourth century, A.D. 300-400), were often Barbarians. Hence, perhaps, the later vague title of *Bretwalda*, meaning " Master of Britons," and occasionally assumed by barbaric head kings in England during the Dark Ages—A.D. 500-800.

went on, it was a Christian community badly isolated. It had the essentials—the Mass, Bishoprics, Monasteries—but it was more and more warped and starved.

After A.D. 600 Catholic missionaries from France and Italy began to found schools among these eastern "Teutonic-" speaking settlements. The isolated native Christians of the west would not work with them, so the powerful civilization of the United Church spread through the medium of the eastern courts, and thus what we call "Anglo-Saxon" dialects spread with it slowly westward. But even as late as the year 900 there was a mixture of "Celtic" (Welsh) and "Anglo-Saxon" (mixed German and Latin) speech in the Midlands; and the historian of that day mentions old British names for towns and rivers.

Not much later—shortly after the year 1000—French (which was a much transformed descendant of low or popular Latin) began to trickle in through the presence of French-speaking nobles and clerics and through royal marriages. Soon after, a French-speaking king, Edward the Confessor, governed all England. The Conquest, in 1066, increased immediately and very greatly the proportion of French-speakers. The chief clergy, the court, most squires, all educated men were French-speaking within a generation, and for 250 years the influence of that language spread downwards until, by about 1300, one may say that French was the only familiar and daily language of the English well-to-do classes, was familiar to the middle and lower-middle, and unknown only—or but little known—to the labourers, who continued to speak a great number of local "Anglo-Saxon" dialects with a small and dwindling vocabulary. But when things were written down, even in these degraded dialects, French influence appeared. Perhaps a fifth of the nation spoke French only. Another fifth (say) spoke French, but could make themselves understood in the local "Anglo-Saxon" dialects. Another fifth had these for their mother tongue, but could understand a little French.

The remainder of the labourers and peasants had no vocabulary save the poor remains of the local "Anglo-Saxon" patois. The position was thus somewhat like that of Wales 100 years ago, where, about 1820, English and Welsh stood in much the same relation one to the other as French and the "Anglo-Saxon" local dialects stood about 1300 in England.

Then came, a generation after 1300, the Black Death, which destroyed a fourth or a fifth of the nation, and so disturbed society as to throw it into a melting-pot. Upper class traditions were broken. Tutors were lacking. Schools declined. Servants brought up the children of the rich. Within a lifetime the great turmoil was settling down, and there emerged an amalgam—the *English Tongue* which we speak to-day, and which is the noblest of western idioms, the richest, the most flexible, that possessing the greatest body and power of lyric verse—the true test of a language. It was a new thing. French in order of thought and in half its vocabulary, Germanic in many of its characteristic sounds (*ing* and the *onomatopoea*, that is, sounds imitating that thing in nature which the words convey, such as "Splash," "Ring," "Thunder"), Teutonic (i.e. German and debased Latin) in its older words, with many traces of Celtic too; highly national and quite separate from German, French, or Latin in feeling; it has endured, and now covers great spaces of the earth. From A.D. 1400 onwards, all the active mass of the nation, save some few at court, spoke *English*, not French nor the "Anglo-Saxon" relics of shire-dialects.

The *Religion* of the English (which, much more than language and even more than race, has affected their being) has changed twice: from Pagan to Catholic, from Catholic to Protestant.

It was *Pagan* in the origin. That is, ignorant of the One True God, and therefore cruel and despairing—yet natural and with all the natural virtues: a foundation upon which to build.

From this state a slow process transformed the English by a very gradual revolution into a *Catholic* nation. It began, if we may trust the cloudy but vast authority of our most ancient tradition, in the apostolic age at Glastonbury. More than a century later a vassal kinglet of Britain under Roman rule asked Rome to send him missionaries.[1] The Catholic Church (that is, the doctrine of the Incarnation and of the Eucharist or Mass, the Hierarchy, all the organism) acted in England as it did throughout the Empire; an increasing force, until, after A.D. 300, it became the official religion of the Emperors. It controlled, however, between 300 and 400, only a minority of the population, for its monuments are few (they record three bishops, two martyrs, one heresiarch of great fame—a few buildings). The troubles of the fifth and sixth centuries (A.D. 400-600) trampled out in the Midlands and on the eastern and south-eastern coasts the beginnings of religion. It survived in the west as I have said; but, as we saw, distorted, starved, and isolated, cut off from Rome. When missionaries revived it in the east, south-east, and Midlands in the seventh century (600-700) their success was rapid and universal, and by the eighth (700-800) all England was Catholic again (save for a dwindling remnant of schismatics in the west), and so remained for 800 years less subject to the recurrent heretical reactions than other provinces of Christendom.

Shortly after A.D. 1500 various attempts at restoring an imagined, simplified, and primitive form of Christian doctrine began to break up the unity of the Catholic world. These had some effect among the Germans, French, Flemings, and Poles; less in Italy; very little in Spain;

[1] This piece of plain history has been disputed, of course, as has everything that *can* be disputed to the detriment of Christian antiquity. But the thing is at once highly probable and duly recorded in a document which, though much later in its existing form, yet clearly repeats old and established Roman records. The latest attempt at denying the story, Harnack's, is typically fantastic in its juggling with a perfectly clear text. His name was Lucius.

none in Ireland; and hardly any in England, until a political quarrel with the Papacy, and the seizure of the Church lands (by the wealthier classes and many upstarts as well) opened the way to change. Those few Englishmen opposed to unity and tradition formed a very small and a most unpopular but an intellectual minority. The new millionaires enriched with the loot of the monasteries naturally supported the change. Through a hundred vicissitudes they held fast, and gradually extirpated the Catholic religion in defiance of an unwilling populace. The young of the new generations were forbidden all access to Catholic teaching; the new doctrines from the Continent were artificially imposed in all schools. The process continued until, after a long lifetime (1535-1605) the English people had become, a good half of them, what is called *Protestant*: a spirit too well known to need definition. Of the remaining half of the nation a minority only, after 1605, retained some clear conception of the ancestral creed, and all directing power in government, most wealth, all teaching authority was occupied in the reduction of that minority. Another long lifetime (1605-1685) sufficed to reduce that minority to one severely persecuted eighth or seventh of the people, with perhaps as many again in a vague but dwindling sympathy with them; but the bulk of the nation was grown hostile to the Catholic temper, and England had become a new thing to which its own past was foreign. The end came between 1685 and 1689. The whole weight of the wealthier classes, the squires and great merchants, the universities and all officialdom, combined for a decision and the destruction of all Catholic knowledge. It was achieved. The Catholic religion was finally crushed and immediately disappeared, save for a tiny remnant. Within a lifetime (by, say, 1760) Catholics had sunk to be at the most one-hundredth of the English people. They were thoroughly cowed and of no effect on the nation at large, which had come to forget the very nature of the Faith.

During this great revolution the monarchy fell to be a convention losing all real power: an aristocracy based on wealth superseded it. The populace lost its economic freedom and fell into dependence upon the small class of owners. The popular restraint upon innovation was removed, merchant adventure had full opportunity, and domestic experiment as well. Upon such foundations grew up a hitherto unknown industrial enterprise based on a rapidly increasing proletarian population, an accepted governing class especially trained under a school and University system peculiar to itself, and a domestic polity of very large towns amid which agriculture and all the older society slowly failed. This polity came at last to erect outside its own islands a vast sporadic commercial commonwealth spread throughout the world, not united spiritually, animated by an intense patriotism at the centre, insufficiently armed by land, lacking form, admirably organized, failing to reconcile or absorb its very various subject elements, tolerant, dependent for its structure upon a supreme fleet of unequalled skill and tradition. All this, which is modern England, has been the fruit of the last and second religious revolution generally known as the *Reformation*.

Historical

The History of England proper—the *recorded* History of which we have surviving, written, contemporary evidence—opens with the landing of Julius Cæsar in August, 55 B.C.; that is, about fifty years, more or less, before the birth of Our Lord.[1]

Before Cæsar's time there were written a few allusions to England. The first is to be found in the remaining

[1] There is no material giving us the exact date of the Nativity. It is certain that our conventional date—the date A.D. 1 in our chronology—is too late, but exactly how much it is impossible to determine. The most widely accepted guess is 4 B.C., and it is certain that the Nativity cannot have been later than 2 B.C. nor earlier than 7 B.C.

fragments of a Greek traveller from Marseilles, called Pytheas, who visited England about 250 years earlier. His is the earliest remaining witness to the name "Pretanic." Again, some fifty years before Cæsar's time another Greek, from Rhodes, one Posidonius, also wrote about England, and fragments of his work also remain. But they tell us nothing more than what Pytheas tells us: the export of tin, the name "Brittanic;" "Belerion" as the name for the extremity of Cornwall.

Beyond these slight allusions there is, of course, a mass of remains which show that man had long inhabited this island. There are graves and human bones and implements of stone, bronze, and iron, and ornaments of gold and silver, etc. On these fragments modern books have been written in vast numbers, full of theories about races and tongues and various imagined invasions. But it is all mere guesswork, and may be neglected so far as real history is concerned. For real history can only be based on written records helped by tradition, that is, by written and verbal statements handed down from generation to generation. Now of *tradition* we have nothing concerning the earlier history of this country, and the *record* only begins with the arrival of Julius Cæsar.

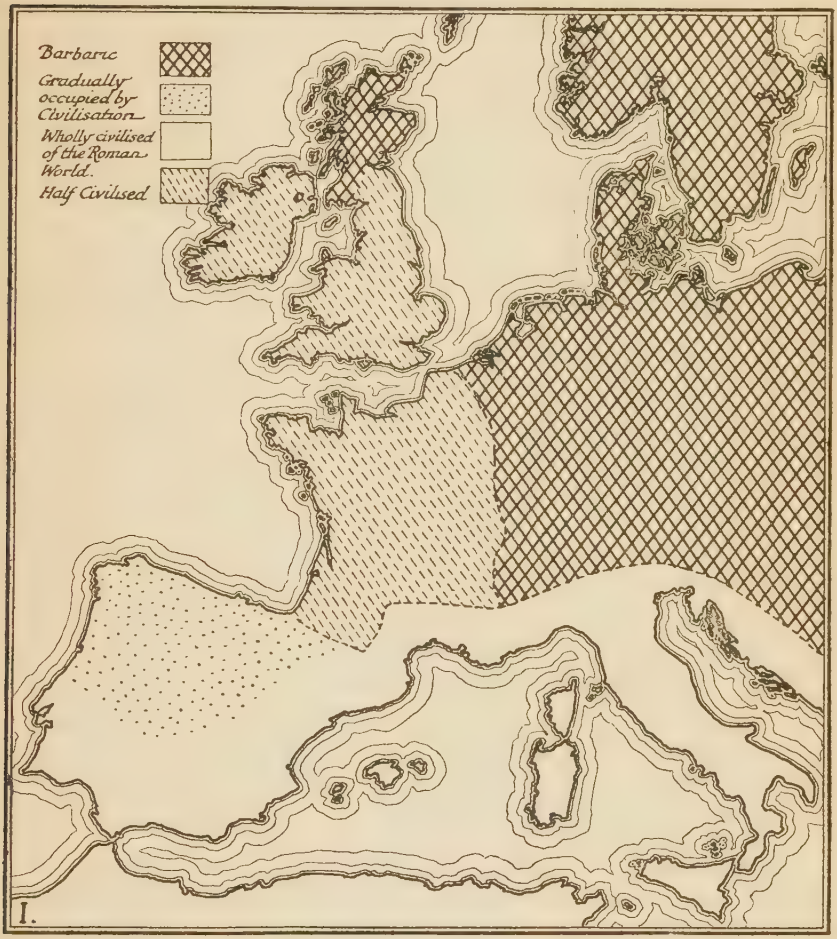
It is therefore at this moment, 55 B.C., that we must take our first survey and see where England stood at the origin of her story.

. . . . . .

England and the English are part of a much larger whole which we still call Europe. And by this we do not mean the exact geographical division to which the term "Europe" now applies, but a great body of human beings with much the same features and complexions and with languages more or less akin: a group of human beings who instinctively feel a great deal in common among themselves and tend to produce one culture, that is, one kind of civilization.

At this time, nearly two thousand years ago, when our English history opens, this body of Europeans lay in three

MAP I



ROUGH SKETCH OF THE THREE DIVISIONS, CIVILIZED, HALF-CIVILIZED, AND BARBARIC AT THE ORIGIN OF ENGLISH HISTORY

great divisions: one, fully civilized, lay to the south, on the shores of the Mediterranean; one with many arts and traditions, and an organized and powerful religion, yet not fully

civilized, lay to the north-west of the Mediterranean; one, east of the Vosges and Rhine, north of the Alps and Balkans, was wholly barbaric and obscure, a mass of savages. The civilized people, the first group, lived in what we call to-day Italy, Greece, Eastern and Southern Spain, the southern fringe of France, and in Asia Minor, Tunis, and Algiers. The second lived in what we call to-day France, England, Ireland, parts of Scotland and Belgium; but among them though they had considerable culture, were hill-patches of barbarism. The third, or savage, group without organized religion or culture of any recognizable kind was spread and wandered over the territories now called Holland, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, the German States, Poland, and the States and peoples along the Danube.

These wholly uncivilized Europeans formed one mass of tribes similar in their common character of wandering savagery, but a chaos of separate dialects and groups. They fell, perhaps, into two main divisions, but divisions constantly intermingling and influencing each other's languages and ideas. These were a group between Elbe and Rhine talking dialects based on what to-day we call *Teutonic* sounds, and another beyond the Elbe which probably used dialects of what we to-day call "Slav" sounds. But the savages moved about so much that one cannot speak of clear divisions among them, and their scanty vocabularies, Teutonic and Slav, intermingled continually. The first stretched from just west of the Rhine (say about the Vosges mountains, and the Ardennes) to the Elbe or even beyond; the other stretched from the Vistula basin all the way to the Plains of Russia; and in between the Elbe and the Vistula was probably a hotch-potch.

Between these savages of Germany and the higher peoples of the Atlantic countries—France, Britain, etc.—there was far more than a difference in the degree of cultivation: there was a violent contrast in *kind*. Passing from the savage central to the partly civilized Atlantic part, the

traveller crossed a clean division and felt a sudden change of surroundings, like the change that is felt in coming out from forest into well-tilled land.[1]

We find, then, that the old world of Europe, from which we all come, had three main parts: I will reverse the order in which I first mentioned them and put them in an ascending order to describe them in more detail. They were, then: (1) An Eastern and Northern part (Russia, Poland, the Baltic, the Germanies, Scandinavia), where men quite barbarous lived a dull sort of base, undeveloped life, with no institutions worthy of remark, and no distinctive religion or political ideas; (2) a Western and Northern part (France, the British Isles), where men, though not fully civilized, lived an interesting life full of political ideas, having a well-developed art, cities, constitutions, and, what is more important, having a *profound and highly organized dogmatic religious system;* (3) a highly civilized part to the South, all round the Mediterranean Sea.

(1) The first division, the quite barbarous north and east (Germany, Holland, the Slav countries, Scandinavia), knew nothing of writing or record, and had no idea of a State or Nation or City. It was made up, as I have said, of savage wandering tribes which drifted together into big chance groups and then broke apart again into small bands. The names of these savage tribes, groups, and bands were perpetually changing, because all this mass of barbarism was without tradition. Their speech was, of course, a confusion of dialects, but there were two things to be remarked about it. The first thing was this: that these dialects all came to, and ended at, a sharp boundary westward, that is, they

[1] How this sharp division of savage and half-civilized came to be we are quite ignorant. There are innumerable books written which talk solemnly of an "Aryan" race coming westward from Asia; of a "Celtic culture" moving towards the Atlantic from Russia, and so on. They are not history. They are guesswork; and each new guess is supplanted at a short interval by another equally baseless.

were very different from the speech of the second, half-civilized division: a man from Bath in England or Bourges in France could only have understood, among the words spoken by a newly-arrived slave from the Neckar or Weser, a few less degraded western words. Secondly, dialects changed a great deal as one went eastward. On the Rhine and up to the Lower Elbe—sometimes beyond the Lower Elbe—the barbarous folk spoke (in a very limited vocabulary) words which still survive in the older terms of German. For a stream they had sounds like *Bak, Bach, Bek;* for a divinity a sound like *Got, God, Gut;* for a dwelling a sound like *hus, haus;* for a sheet of water a sound like *zee, see.* These few words were quite their own. But even in the earliest times they seem to have easily acquired, as do all simple barbarians, the words of their higher neighbours to the west and south; and by the time their dialects were written down (the eighth and ninth centuries) these so-called "Teutonic" forms of speech, Saxon, High German, etc., are quite as much composed of degraded Latin and Greek as of the original savage German.[1] The people of Scandinavia (that is, of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway), though very different in build and character from the Germans to the south, had similar words. But as you went eastward you would have found more and more words of two other kinds, which are called to-day *Lithuanian* and *Sclavonic* sounds. In these the expression of elementary things was different. But there was no sharp line dividing the dialects or the stock of all this eastern darkness. The German stock melted into the Lithuanian

[1] The reader will find examples quoted later in these pages which show how very largely Teutonic or Germanic speech was composed of borrowed and degraded Mediterranean elements. It is the great and revolutionary work of Professor Wiener which has proved this, and destroyed the old and erroneous ideas of a past generation upon the early date and native character of our oldest Germanic records. We now know, since Wiener's research and reasoning have appeared, that no very early record of Germanic speech has survived, and that the Germanic dialects of our documents, very many Teutonic words in constant use, are largely Greek and Latin in origin.

and Sclavonic, and the dialects of the tribes moved in the same way.

These barbarians were then little visited by the civilized men of the Mediterranean, and hardly at all by the western men of France and England; there was no strong motive to overcome the danger and nuisance of going deep into their heaths and marshes. They had not the skill to produce anything worth exchanging. They could barely feed themselves on their herds and here and there some sort of very primitive tillage. Now and then a merchant from the civilized south ventured among them, but with no appreciable effect. Very rarely an armed force of the better equipped Westerners would march into their country—there was once a colony of Westerners in Bohemia—or even march across it on an expedition southward. That was all. On the other hand, individuals from this belt of German, Lithuanian, and Sclavonic darkness frequently came south as captured slaves or hired men, even quite early in the story of Europe. They also felt a vague but (in fits) strong call to move by tribes, or even great groups of tribes at a time, towards the south-east, south, or south-west. This call which fitfully moved them to migrate was composed of three elements: first, the fact that even in their own country they were forever moving from district to district, so that a great "trek" was an instinct with them; next, the fact that the west and still more the south and south-east, had better soil and climate than those of their own forests and marshes and sandy heaths; lastly, and much the most important, the fact that the half-civilized west, and still more the civilized south and south-east, had accumulated wealth, which the uncivilized north was tempted to loot.

From the earliest known times, 2000 years ago and more, right on till the Catholic Church, after 1000 years of expansion, had penetrated these central districts, civilized them, and made them a part of *Christendom*—teaching them writing and record and building and all the rest of it—one

main part of the story of Europe is the recurring necessity under which the civilized part lay of keeping out or reducing to subjection the incursions of this barbarous central mass between the Rhine and the Russian plains. The civilized and half-civilized men of the west and south were always by far more numerous, but, whereas they had no cause (save defence, and, later, zeal for religion) to go into the barbarians' country, the barbarians of the centre and north had always good cause to go into *their* country.

Only a lifetime before English history opens with Cæsar's landing in Britain, a great herd of them, German-speaking and Slav-speaking mixed, had broken bounds and come lumbering westward and southward. They got as far as the lower Rhone, where a Roman army (under Marius, Cæsar's uncle) met them and massacred the whole lot indiscriminately.

It was always so for centuries. Small bands could sometimes make a stealthy raid. But every time the barbarians of the central north and east broke into the west or south in any numbers they were pitilessly massacred. They were never admitted save as inferiors subjected to the civilization they had entered, whether hired to be soldiers, or bound and settled on land to till it, or (more commonly) as mere slaves. Whatever religion and social customs they may have had in their own barbaric lands we know nothing of. Any such simple customs can have had no strength, for they were at once lost on coming into the land of their superiors.[1]

(2) The second, Atlantic or western, division (half-civilized) concerns us more nearly, because we derive from it our stock—our blood, our race—and its inherited tendencies. It lay, as I have said, west of the Vosges Mountains, the

[1] We have only one brief description of the Barbaric North about a century later: that of Tacitus written with a motive of contrasting the virtuous savage with the luxurious Roman. It gives us nothing distinctive, only the usual primitive habits of war-band, etc., evidently there was little to know; and of institutions, of course, or organized religion, not a sign.

Ardennes, and the North Sea, and filled France, the British Islands, and Ireland.

In it also the life was tribal. In it also there was a certain amount of displacement: thus, when Cæsar landed in England the coming thither of certain colonies from France was a recent memory. But that life was full, diverse, and high, though not as high as the complete civilization of the south. There were cities everywhere, of long standing, an appreciable body of tradition, and even a little writing which was practised in letters of the Greek alphabet, learnt from merchants of the south. There was active political discussion and practice, some of the districts being under aristocratic, some under royal government. There was a strong feeling for the local and tribal state, and even—though not fixed—for a national group. The people of France (or *Gaul*, as it was then called), of England (or *Britain*), of Ireland (*Eire*), had each a common name by which to express each its sense of unity, and something of a common policy in times of special strain.

Much the same language, though doubtless in various dialects, was spoken in the greater part of that area, with probably a considerable distinction between east and west in this island, but yet with an easy intercommunication. The so-called "Celtic" tongues still living are modern forms of the original languages—languages closely allied to those of the civilized south—used in the greater part of this second, or western, division of Europe, the bulk of which was made up of France and England. To-day, save for the "Celtic" survivals in Wales and remote parts of Scotland, Ireland, and Brittany, this old unity of language has disappeared under the adoption of Latin dialects by the French and of a mixed German, Latin, and Celtic speech by the English. But the underlying unity of tradition remains: the Atlantic west is still one, though its unity is now profoundly modified by divergent modern experiences, especially by the violent and increasing conflict between Protestant

and Catholic culture since 1600: a conflict which created sympathy between England and Northern Germany, antipathy between England and France or Ireland.

Much more important than any of these elements, both as a cause and as an effect of the western character, as a proof of its elevation and as a test of its inmost spirit, was its essential *Religion* in those early times.

The Religion of the western, half-civilized division of Old Europe, the Religion of the men inhabiting these islands and France, was a distinct and special thing, highly defined. It has been of the greatest moment to the world, because its cardinal doctrine was PERSONAL IMMORTALITY. The certitude that an individual does not cease to be when his body dies, but that he continues forever as a personal being, has done more for the vigour of our race than any other idea—and that doctrine though already degraded into transmigration was the essential doctrine of these western people. Such a doctrine affects the whole of each man's character, and all that men collectively do. Between those who think thus and those who do not, there is a difference upon the very meaning of the world.

Of course, all peoples have some intimation of such a truth, for it is part of man. It is possible that even the utter barbarians of the north and east had some misty glimpse of a future life. But we know nothing of their ideas until long after they had felt the influence of the Church. The civilized cities of the south felt the *instinct* of immortality profoundly; but they felt it vaguely. Burial was most sacred with them, prayers and offerings to and for the dead were native to them; their poems and legends are full of the soul. But, with them, the survivor of death was an ill-defined, uncertain phantom, therefore somewhat despairing. Many denied it. Heroes might attain full life: the rest were shades. With the Atlantic westerners in Gaul and Britain and Ireland the thing was strict dogma, and from them it spread at last as a certitude to the civilized south,

indoctrinated the near east, though in odd Pythagorean or material Syriac forms; it came to full recognition in the Church, and, through the Church, was imposed, centuries later, upon the eastern barbarians beyond the Rhine.

The religion of Gaul and Britain, of which this statement of Immortality was the central doctrine, was strictly organized. It had ritual and a body of philosophy and teaching. It had a hierarchy of priests (called Druids), and these were properly ordered under one head. Their influence was very great; their sacramental character clear; their separation from the mass of men absolute.

(3) The third of our divisions is the *Civilized South* round the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

This civilization, from which we get all our arts and institutions, began so long ago that there is no record of its origin. However far we go back we find a high civilization on the shores of the Mediterranean. This civilization was built up of "*city-states*," that is, the civilized men of the Mediterranean felt themselves to be members not of great countries as we do now, but of *cities*, each with its surrounding agricultural district to support it. There were exceptions; some districts formed divisions as large as a small modern nation; but the rule was for men to be grouped in a *city*, and each city had its own gods and its own laws and its own constitution. Of course, groups of similar language and customs would hold together more or less. The Greek group was thus separate and highly conscious of its distinct character. There were also rough parts, especially in the mountains, where men lived as tribes rather than as citizens of a city. But the city was the normal type, and city-patriotism was the tone of all that world. As men to-day are Englishmen, or Frenchmen, or Americans, men then were *Athenians* of the city of Athens, or *Carthaginians* of the town of Carthage.

At the moment when British History begins (55 B.C.) the southern civilized Mediterranean part of Europe had

all become united with one supreme Government called *Roman*, because it had grown up from the town of Rome. All the city-states, tribes, and nations bordering on the Mediterranean Sea in what are now Spain, Italy, Southern France, North Africa, the Balkans, Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, had become, after a long process of closer grouping, dependent upon or allied to the city-state of Rome, and were beginning to form what was later called "The Roman Empire."

This town had begun, like the others, as a city with a small agricultural district round it, having its private laws and gods and institutions. But it had from the first—hundreds of years before Cæsar's time—pursued a steady and successful policy of uniting others to itself and spreading its influence. It fought against neighbouring towns, and either conquered them or made with them alliances which left Rome their leader. It thus built up a confederation, the army of which was a Roman army always, and the chief place in which was always held by Rome. Rome became the head of all Italy. Rome, being military, challenged and destroyed the rival commercial power of Carthage (a city with a vile Semitic religion, quite different from our European sort), and so became mistress of what is to-day Tunis and Algiers, and of the islands in the western Mediterranean and of the coasts of Spain, all of which Carthage used to control. Rome next became mistress also of all the Greek part of the Mediterranean, what we call to-day Greece, the Balkans, more and more of Asia Minor, Syria also; her soldiers and functionaries occupied more and more of Spain inland, she held all the southern fringe of France.

As the power of Rome thus expanded until it took in the whole of the old civilized world round the Mediterranean Sea, the cities covered by its rule were still left with their local life and patriotism, for the most part, and it was only in the more general things—but especially in the army—

that the rule of Rome was felt. The army, which was the cement of that world, had begun by being recruited entirely from Romans, then from all Italians; by Cæsar's time it recruited already from outside Italy. But it was everywhere the *Roman* army, commanded by Romans and drilled in the Roman fashion.[1] The civilization which thus came to be called "the Roman world," was dependent upon and held together by the army. This great Mediterranean state was essentially a military thing. This army was organized into a number of small army corps called *legions;* it garrisoned the whole of that world, and held its frontiers against the barbarians, and also built roads, and in a large measure *governed.*

The Romans, as their power expanded, had always allowed more and more people to call themselves full Roman citizens, and to be, in legal theory, part of their city-state. Besides these they admitted vast and increasing numbers to lesser degrees of citizenship (as we should call it), so that the whole of their great dominion was bound together by a network of rights and privileges culminating in the government of the city of Rome itself, which was in the hands of a *Senate*—a council of the chief Roman families and public officers—and of certain officials elected by the people. These officials (the chief of which were the two *Consuls,* annually elected), and the Senate gave orders to the armies, appointed their commanders—usually from one of the chief Roman families—and decided public policy.

The whole of this great Roman world came to have one law. It had also one official language, Latin, but in practice two languages for its educated governing classes: Greek in the eastern half and Latin in the western. Nearly all men spoke one of the two, and most educated men could speak both.

Just before our first date—55 B.C.—one of the military

[1] Though already using some barbaric mercenaries.

commanders, Julius Cæsar, had undertaken the conquest of France, or, in Roman speech, *Gallia*. It was the first attempt made to spread the civilization of the Mediterranean outside its old boundaries, and it was completely successful. In the midst of that conquest Julius Cæsar found that there was a close connection between the Gauls and the British in the island to the north of them ; some of the British had helped the Gauls to resist the Roman armies, and the Gauls looked to Britain as the seat of their religion. It was this connection which, as we shall see, led Julius Cæsar to land in England, and so to bring this island into the Roman sphere.

. . . . . .

Before we end this survey of foundation and origin, we must add that *all* that ancient world in its three divisions of wholly barbarous north and east, half-civilized west, and wholly-civilized south, had a group of social ideas in common.

Of these, the three most important were :—

(1) *Paganism*, that is, the idea that our life should be ordered with regard to our good in this world alone (for even those who believed in immortality did not think of it as the *object* of life in this world).

(2) A worship of *many gods* (called " Polytheism "), differing with each tribe or city, though often held in common and often confused. There was no idea (save among the Jews) that these gods excluded each other ; some could be worshipped by one people, others by another, without contradiction. There was no exact definition of them ; but they were prayed to, appeased and humoured by the sacrifice of animals and the dedication of objects or land.

(3) *Slavery*. All the old Pagan world, the barbarians just as much as the civilized men, owned *slaves*. All reposed on *slavery*. It was the basis of that society, as wage-earning is of ours. The slaves were the most numerous part of the population everywhere, and most of the work was done by

them. They were never soldiers or citizens, or regarded as members even of the wildest tribes. It is a point we must always remember when we consider the fighting and the political changes of antiquity. The people we read about are only a minority of free men : the rest did not count as part of the state—they were chattels, to be bought and sold.

. . . . . .

In all these three great ancient divisions England and the English have a part.

The blood and stock, the race, of the English is of the second, or half-civilized Atlantic west.

The first, or wholly barbaric northern part (the Rhine to Russia), furnished some slight addition of blood to this island, through pirate raids, imported German slaves, and settlements, and gave the English one element of their present language.

The third, the civilized Greek and Roman part, gave them all their institutions and implements and structure of thought ; while through the largely Latin elements of all Teutonic dialects and later the almost wholly Latin French, it also gave them the better half of their speech.

This *triple* root is peculiar to the English and their history out of all Europe.

PAGAN ENGLAND

I

The First Contact with Civilization

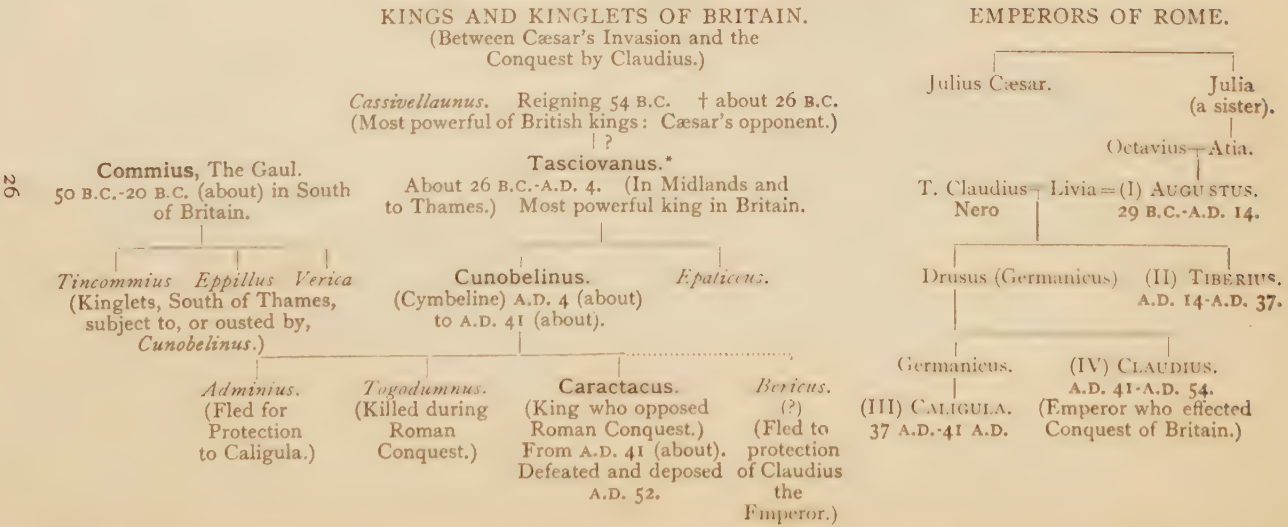
55 B.C.–A.D. 43

97 Years

SUCCESSION OF BRITISH KINGS AND ROMAN EMPERORS

(55 B.C.-A.D. 43.)

(During the first Romanization of Britain.)



* Almost certainly of Cassivellaunus' blood, presumably son.

PAGAN ENGLAND

I

THE FIRST CONTACT WITH CIVILIZATION

England Romanized

(August, 55 B.C., to the Spring of A.D. 43—97 years)

IN the night of August 25th, 55 B.C., a fleet of some few fast galleys and of eighty slower transports, commanded by Julius Cæsar, dropped out of Boulogne harbour on the ebb-tide. The transports bore the Tenth and Seventh Legions of the Roman army, the less numerous galleys bore details such as the Balearic slingers and the Southern Bowmen. The provisions carried were but a few days' supply. Not a campaign but a reconnaissance in force was intended, and the whole force may have numbered some ten thousand men, not more. The wind was southerly, but light and changeable. It was not till nine o'clock of the next morning, the 26th, that the galleys found themselves under Dover cliffs, and the heavier transports lay far behind; it was mid-afternoon before these came up to the galleys anchored off the British shore. An hour or so later the tide began to make eastward, and the whole fleet ran for Deal beach.

Julius Cæsar's first expedition, August, 55 B.C.

On the cliffs above a large local force of the British, accompanied by many chariots, watched the approach. They had warning of the Roman General's intention, and they must have guessed the landing-place, because, some days earlier, a galley under the Tribune Gaius Volsenus had been sent out by Cæsar to scout along the coast and to report on the opportunities for disembarking troops.

Its landing

The transports were run aground, the troops, after some hesitation in face of fierce opposition, waded from the ships, The British chariots, driven into the water against them, were confused by the arrows and stones of slingers on the galleys, and before night all that infantry was ashore and entrenching itself. They had no cavalry. Cæsar had provided 500 Gallic horsemen, who were to have sailed in eighteen transports from Ambleteuse. As these ships had been delayed from joining him at Boulogne, he had sent the cavalry on to Ambleteuse to embark there and to follow him. Without them he could not push the reconnaissance inland.

Disaster through storm and spring-tide

On the next day, August 27th, British envoys came in with offers of submission and hostages. Others followed them on the morrow—probably local leaders who had found their power of resistance inadequate. Had Cæsar received his cavalry, and had not accident followed, he would, we may presume, have made a thorough exploration of the district, received sufficient hostages, perhaps drawn up some formal agreement, and sailed back with his little army immediately. What changed his plans and in the main defeated his projects was an easterly storm. It arose on the 30th of August, the fourth day after his landing, just at the full moon. His cavalry transports, already in sight, were dispersed and driven back to France. The spring-tide—then fully making and flowing against the gale—raised a sea beating right on to Deal beach, and reached a level which swamped and damaged many of his beached ships in the night. Twelve had to be broken up, the rest repaired.

And retirement after less than a month's absence

As the supplies were now exhausted he had to detach men to cut corn in the neighbourhood. They were harassed. After a few days of heavy rain a general attack on the camp followed. It was beaten off, and again the local leaders offered peace and hostages. But the position was untenable, and, under the advantage of this last check inflicted upon the local tribesmen, Cæsar embarked his forces that same

night and sailed back to France. It was not yet the Equinox. The whole expedition had lasted perhaps three weeks. Even as a reconnaissance it had failed, save that it gave him some idea of the chief differences between British and Gallic fighting—especially the chariots—and a knowledge of the conditions of landing.

Such knowledge as he had gained he used in preparing what he designed (it would seem) to be a thorough invasion and occupation in the following year : a success that should be an extension of his great conquest of Gaul, which had changed the character of the Roman Dominions and made him the first man in the world.

Julius Cæsar's second invasion, July, 54 B.C.

A very large fleet was built ;[1] the transports on a new model, shallower and broader and fitted with oars. Arrangements were made for continuous supply from his continental base, and about the end of the first week of July, 54 B.C., Cæsar set out, again from Boulogne, on his intended conquest, with a force of some 40,000 men—2000 of them cavalry. He disembarked the force from noon onwards at a spot on the beach a few miles northwards of his last landing-place, between Deal and Sandwich.

Cassivellaunus his chief opponent

His chief enemy awaiting him in Britain was one Cassivellaunus, the king whose stronghold was at St. Albans. But Cæsar had allies. Cassivellaunus had oppressed the people of Essex—then called Trinobantes. He had killed their king, and that king's son had appealed for Roman help, and had fled to Cæsar. Cæsar, then, had Cassivellaunus and his army for his first objective in the campaign.

Cæsar's storming of Bigberry camp

He determined to strike at once, for a loosely organized enemy must not be given time to concentrate. He hurried so that, in spite of his last year's lesson, he left his ships at anchor, not hauled ashore, and a tenth of his force to guard them ; with the rest he marched inland that very evening for the heights beyond Canterbury, twelve miles off, where

[1] In what was then inland water and is now a flat between Boulogne and Pont de Briques.

prisoners had told him the main British force was standing. They were in earthworks (still to be traced on Bigberry Hill), covered by the Stour. In the course of the following day the Seventh Legion forded the stream and easily stormed the hill. He camped that night. But next morning, just as his cavalry was being launched after the retreat of the enemy, news reached Cæsar that *again* a storm and high tide had partly wrecked his fleet.

A storm again wrecks his fleet

That accident ruined the campaign. Cæsar had to bring the troops back to the coast and waste ten days' time in hauling his ships up and entrenching them. In the interval the armies of the southern and eastern British states concentrated. Cassivellaunus was elected Commander-in-Chief, and when Cæsar started westward again from the coast towards the end of July, his march (probably along Watling Street, through Rochester) was perpetually harassed. He skirted London (of which he makes no mention) to the south, crossed the Thames, it seems at Brentford, forcing a staked ford (his men up to their necks in water), and made round by the north and east for Essex, where was the state of his allies, the Trinobantes, and ample provision for his troops. He stormed and sacked Cassivellaunus' stronghold at St. Albans, and took all his cattle, and meanwhile his force of 4000 men at the base had beaten off a Kentish attack on the naval camp near Deal, for which Cæsar was anxious, and which he visited himself, returning in the midst of his operations to do so. Tribes in the neighbourhood of the Roman march submitted, and Cassivellaunus himself sued for peace and offered hostages and promised tribute. But the object of the expedition was not attained. The resistance had proved unexpectedly strong. Cæsar dared not continue. He regained the continent with his army about the middle of September, and the first attempt of the Roman power upon England was at an end.

He storms Cassivellaunus' stronghold

but has to retire and leave England

. . . . . .

Condition of England at this time

Thus was the first contact established between this country and the civilized south. We know from sufficient evidence in what condition England was at this the opening of its recorded history. It was well populated [1] (say half a dozen millions but hardly more). It was divided into small sub-nations inhabiting each its region, and governed by local kings who soon minted and issued a gold coinage on the Roman model. These kings struggled in local wars against each other—a powerful one often becoming suzerain of several tribes—and each division might have lesser divisions, each with its kinglets: thus Kent alone had, at one time, four. Britain was well tilled and full of agricultural wealth. It had roads and cities. It raised and exported tin and iron; it traded largely with Gaul. It was closely connected with Gaul in language, race, and religion: the latter under that highly organized sacred priesthood which I have already mentioned, who formed a strict hierarchy, obeyed one supreme head, taught the immortality of the soul, and exercised much legal power and even some political executive power through their

[1] The numbers of population before a regular census existed are necessarily uncertain, but we have deciding elements to guide us: the arable area (allowing for a somewhat greater extent of forest and marsh than there is now), the number of towns recorded in a given area, the nature of tillage—much the same throughout Western Europe—the size of the armies raised in restricted areas *from freemen alone*, the common-sense rule that a population, save under the recent effect of disaster, increases to the limit which its type of agriculture and the area available to it will maintain. We must pay no attention, of course, to the artificial numbers of our modern industrialism, or to the silly bias against the past which always tries to put it on as small a scale as possible. The best judgment, following such rules, is that Britain normally maintains off its own soil from six to seven million souls on its lowlands, excluding the half-deserted moors and mountain lands. As civilization in Britain was then but partly developed, and much of the North was wild, it is wiser to set the inferior limit and say six millions. There is no space here for the full argument, but, in general, (*a*) cereal crops gave at least two-thirds of present yield; (*b*) attempts to establish a fantastically low population by Domesday and Poll tax lists only give a minimum, and that on an artificial taxing basis and by a particular method. The armies raised, the arable area, the number of dioceses—every general argument suggests much larger numbers.

weapon of excommunication. This religion was odious to the civilized Roman south through its practice of magic—that is, the casting of spells over men and the capture of their wills by suggestion—and of human sacrifice. Therefore when the Romans later became masters of the island, they suppressed its external form. But the doctrines and ritual of this original British and Gallic religion have clearly had a powerful and lasting effect over western civilization.

Of the languages spoken in England at this time, we can speak less certainly. Most of them were probably dialects of what it is agreed to-day to call (inaccurately) the " Celtic " group of tongues : survivals of these, mixed with a great deal of later additions, German and Latin, are found in Brittany, Wales, West Ireland, and the Highlands of Scotland. The few names of chieftains and of places and rivers which are mentioned at this date have most of them a " Celtic " cast. On the other hand, Britain had received in the south and east, some time before Cæsar came, a certain immigration from the continent : *Belgic* chiefs, originally inhabiting the country between the Rhine, the Seine, and the Marne ; and we do not know whether these *Belgæ* spoke Celtic, or a Germanic tongue, or a mixture of both. We know they had come into Belgium and north-eastern France from the Rhine, and that they differed from the other people in Gaul, but we do not know more than that. Some of the sub-nations in Britain bore the same names as others over the sea in France, and in the case of one of them, the Atrebates, we know that there was a close connection : Arras was their capital in France and Silchester in England. Also kings in France had exercised some sort of power (the King at Soissons once, for instance) over districts of corresponding population in England.

If the *Belgæ* spoke Germanic or partly Germanic dialects that would help to explain the presence, hundreds of years later, of popular half-Germanic, half-Latin dialects (called to-day " Anglo-Saxon ") in Eastern Britain. But the truth

is we know hardly anything of the popular speech of that time. We know very little indeed of the "Celtic" dialects at that date; and of the Germanic dialects nothing whatever. The first connected sentences of Germanic dialects on the Rhine, in the Netherlands, and in eastern England come to us from a time hundreds of years later, and long after Roman, civilized and Christian, influence had modified these dialects profoundly and made them half-Latin in vocabulary.[1]

It is probable that Latin, the tongue of civilization, already familiar in Gaul, was known to many in Britain before Cæsar came. It certainly was very well known soon after, especially to those in high places. It was in Latin, for instance, that the British kings stamped their coinage.

After Julius Cæsar's abortive expedition of 54 B.C. had returned to France, no military force crossed the channel from the Roman Empire for ninety-six years. But the influence of the Roman Empire and its civilization was extending rapidly in this island during all that time and preparing the way for the Conquest. Therefore, in order to understand what followed, we must have an idea of what was happening in Roman Europe.

Change in the Government of the Roman world after Cæsar's time

When Julius Cæsar made his expeditions Rome was still a *Republic*. Its vast dominions (all the Mediterranean shores, and recently France as well) were governed by that Supreme Council called the Senate—mainly drawn from the great Roman families—and by the elected officials of the Roman state; the kernel of which, where all government centred, was the actual city of Rome.

But the Government was rapidly becoming *Monarchical*, that is, it tended to fall into the hands of one man, the

[1] It was long thought that we possessed early Gothic-German of the sixth century (A.D. 500-A.D. 600), but the learned Wiener, whom I have already quoted, has exploded this. Our earliest *certain* connected fragments of German speech (already mixed with Latin) are of the eighth century (A.D. 700-A.D. 800), and these are few and negligible. There is no body of Germanic writing till the ninth century and later. It is the effect of Charlemagne. And the Codex of Upsala which used to be thought quite early has been proved to be Carolingian.

It becomes a Monarchy under the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, or *Imperator*

Commander of the armies, appointed indeed, by the Senate, and working with the Senate and sitting as a member of the Senate, but in practice become more powerful than the Senate. So many millions of diverse peoples and cities, such a vast extent of territory (2500 miles from east to west and 1500 from north to south) could not be dealt with by a committee: they needed one head. But most important of all in the change was the fact that the whole fabric depended on the *Army*, and an army must be commanded by one head. It was the man in command of the Roman *Army* who became the real master of the Roman state under the title of Commander-in-Chief, or *Imperator*, of which we have made the English word "Emperor." Julius Cæsar, after his conquest of Gaul and his successes over enemies at home, nearly took this position. He was already *Princeps*, that is, "the first man" in the Senate and the state. But the great families disliked this assumption of power by Julius Cæsar, as did many of the middle class and populace of Rome, and he was murdered in March, 44 B.C. After further civil wars his great nephew and adopted son *Augustus* became sole head of the state in 29 B.C., and from that date was, in practice, a monarch. He is counted as the first *Emperor*, and from that time on we speak of the civilized world (France and Belgium to the Rhine, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, the Balkans and Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt and North Africa) as the *Roman Empire*, and we reckon by the *reigns* of its *Emperors*.[1]

Augustus

Tiberius

To Augustus succeeded, on his death in A.D. 14, *Tiberius*, who reigned till A.D. 37, when he was murdered.

At the death of Tiberius a very long lifetime—over ninety years—had passed since the last Roman expedition had hurriedly left Britain. Only the oldest men living

[1] The Civilized West (France, England, Spain, Italy) kept the civilized term Imperator, of which their modern languages make Empereur, Emperor, etc. But the outer barbarians got an echo of the name of *Cæsar* as the distinguishing mark, hence we have the German word "Kaiser" and the Slavonic "Czar."

could remember hearing as children of Julius Cæsar and his British war.

In that interval the world had greatly changed. France (Gaul) was now thoroughly incorporated with the Roman Empire. It had learnt the Latin language and was full of Roman civilization. Wealth had everywhere increased in the general peace and security; but a spiritual change of far greater import was at work. The people of the old Mediterranean world (and of Gaul which had so recently joined it) were in very active inter-communication. Local religions, with their mysterious rites and initiations and philosophies, hitherto confined to little groups of men, now spread from place to place, became universally present, mixed and seethed. With that went a growing, and a universal, doubt, unquiet and expectation of soul. *Something was coming.*

ORIGIN OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

No one knew what that Something was to be. It came at last, quite suddenly. But when it came it was not recognized or understood. A sentence written by a witness of its first appearance exactly expresses that vast misunderstanding. "*Lux in tenebris lucet et tenebræ eam non comprehenderunt.*" ("A light shone in the darkness, but the darkness did not understand it.") This expected "Something," this New Light, was destined to extend from a sharp but very small and quite obscure beginning, to advance against increasing opposition, to plant centre after centre of influence, until, after some three hundred years, it had convinced the Roman world and had full power to undertake the restoration of mankind. This "Something" was the Catholic Church.

Nature of this Institution

It was a society founded in the Greek-speaking, eastern part of the Roman Empire some few years before the death of Tiberius, round about A.D. 29,[1] at Jerusalem, in Palestine; in the midst of Jews now strongly influenced by Grecian culture. A small group of eleven men, under the leadership

[1] Not later than A.D. 31 nor earlier than A.D. 26.

of one Cephas[1] (also called Peter),[2] had there formed an organization for which they claimed as Founder a Man, Jesus Christ, who had been born, some thirty-three years earlier, in the middle of the reign of Augustus, at Bethlehem, near Jerusalem. He had belonged to, lived, and taught in Galilee to the north (whence they came), and He had recently been put to death with the permission of the Roman Governor, at the instance of the Jewish authorities on the charge of blasphemy, because He claimed to be God Himself: this claim His followers strongly affirmed. They added that He had risen from the dead, had ascended into Heaven, and had left with them a certain Institution which would ceaselessly perpetuate His presence on earth. This new Institution was the core of their religious life. Their Master had (they claimed) transformed—and they still could, through His power, transform—the elements of wheaten bread and fermented grape wine into His Body and Blood, whereof the members of their society partook in the rite of Communion. This power to transform bread and wine, and to administrate other functions of power (such as the remission of sins), these eleven claimed, with due ceremonies, to communicate to others, who thus formed a special priesthood within the general body. Admission to this Society was obtained, after instruction in its doctrine, by baptism with water in the Name of God the Father, Creator of all things, Jesus Christ His Son, their Master, *through* whom all things had been created, and the Holy Spirit, informing all things; which Three, though distinct, were yet but one God: a Trinity in One; a Triune God; and this form of initiation also, they said, the Founder had laid down. All was from Him: this ritual of baptism, of the transformed Bread and Wine, of Hierarchy and Sacred Ministry; their doctrine and their foundation as a corporate body were, they said, from this

[1] Perhaps in the original "*Kepha.*"

[2] Galilee was bi-lingual, Greek and Aramaic. Peter, Πέτρος, is the translation into Greek of Kepha (Cephas).

same Jesus Christ whose teaching they had heard in person as devoted followers, seen confirmed by many public wonders, believed in as God; and whose commands and Institution of a Church they were set apart to perpetuate.

Growth of the Catholic Church

Such was the little, highly defined group which was to be of such prodigious effect in transforming the world. The eleven elected a twelfth to fill up the original number of their college: their ardour convinced a new colleague of marvellous zeal and genius, Saul or Paul of Tarsus, who travelled widely, forming branches of the New Society in many cities. Soon after the moment of which I speak—the end of Tiberius's reign—their missionary effort spread on all sides from city to city, founding everywhere similar communities throughout the Roman world, and even beyond it, in Asia, upon the original model.

Within three generations this disciplined body, the Catholic Church, had permeated all civilization as a small but most active minority. Within six it was, though still inferior in number and persecuted, the strongest single force in civilized society. Two hundred years had passed. Before its third century was completed the Catholic Church had taken over the task of ordering the European world.

. . . . . .

Britain draws closer to Rome

During these ninety years, between 54 B.C. and A.D. 37 (when Tiberius died), the connection between Britain and the Roman Empire across the narrow channel developed rapidly. Roman traders penetrated the island more and more. Many Roman citizens thus established themselves here. British men and women of consequence came to Rome. There was intermarriage. The British coinage, with Latin names on it, expanded; the dues on British commerce at the French ports grew large; wealth and culture increased after the Roman fashion, and Britain came to be thought of as a sort of outer connection, more and more intermixed with, though not yet governed by, Rome.

We know something of what passed in Britain politically during this time. About twenty-six years after Cæsar's last expedition, or a little earlier, we may presume that Cassivellaunus was dead, and that (his son?) Tasciovanus, whose name then appears on coins, succeeded him. He may have reigned as chief king in south England (probably with St. Albans as his capital, for he there had his mint) for over thirty years—far into the Roman reign of Augustus.

Events in Britain during this interval

The sons of Tasciovanus (the grandsons of Cassivellaunus?) were Epaticcus and Cymbeline (Cunobelinus). They each took districts: Epaticcus apparently in the west. But Cymbeline became the leading power in south England, north of Thames, as his grandfather had been. He had some connection with Augustus—there is even a tradition that, as a youth, he had been at Augustus' Court.

Meanwhile, south of the Thames, Commius, a Gallic king who had accompanied Julius Cæsar into Britain, quarrelling later with the Romans in Gaul, crossed over to this island again and founded a dynasty. His three sons reigned, either together or as separate kinglets, over Hampshire, Kent, and Sussex, as, Eppillus in Hampshire, Tincommius in Kent and Sussex, with Verica. But this French dynasty of Commius and his sons, south of Thames, was overshadowed by that of Cassivellaunus, whose descendants either made their southern rivals subject kings or ousted them. During the struggle various exiled princes—the name of one, Dubuovellanus, is known—fled to appeal to Augustus, and, later, others to his successors.

Cymbeline lived on as Chief King of south England from the Severn to the North Sea, and from the Midlands to the Channel, all through the end of Augustus' reign and all through that of Tiberius.

After the death of Tiberius in A.D. 37, Cymbeline, still surviving as an old man—and representing British power in Roman eyes—exiled his son, Adminius. This son fled to Rome, and appealed to Caligula, the third Emperor, who

Caligula

had succeeded Tiberius. Caligula was in France when the British Prince arrived, and his submission was in some way regarded as the submission of Britain itself; so great abroad was the prestige of old Cymbeline, of whom Adminius was accepted as heir.

In the next year, in January, A.D. 41, Caligula was killed, and the fourth Roman Emperor, Claudius (Tiberius' nephew), succeeded him. At the same time, or just afterwards, old Cymbeline died, leaving two sons in power after him, Caractacus[1] and Togodumnus. Bericus, who at that time fled over sea and claimed the protection of the Roman Emperor, may have been another, ousted by his brothers. At any rate, it was the troubles following on Cymbeline's death which gave Claudius the opportunity and the motive in A.D. 43 for interfering in Britain. His predecessors had thought of it—Augustus more than once[2]—but Claudius first carried out a plan of conquest, to which I now turn.

Claudius

[1] Perhaps better "Caratacus," but with such variants it is better to use the traditional name. *Variants*: Caractacus, Catarratacus (and in Greek form), Carattac(us), Cartaces (in Greek form), etc.

[2] It seems certain that Tincommius at one moment appealed at his court for protection.

II

The Roman Conquest

A.D. 43–A.D. 122

79 Years

EMPERORS OF ROMAN EMPIRE

During Conquest of Britain

(A.D. 43-A.D. 122)

JULIAN HOUSE

Julius Cæsar — Julia

Atia

T. Claudius Nero = Livia = I. Augustus. (31 B.C.-A.D. 14.)

Drusus. — II. Tiberius. (A.D. 14-A.D. 37.)

Germanicus. — IV. Claudius. A.D. 41-A.D. 54.

III. Caligula. A.D. 37-A.D. 41. — Agrippina = Cn. Dom. Ahenobarbus.

V. Nero. A.D. 54-A.D. 68.
(End of the Line.)

Three successive rival generals, unconnected with the Julian House, all killed within two years:

- VI. Galba. A.D. 68-A.D. 69.
- VII. Otho. A.D. 69.
- VIII. Vitellius. A.D. 69.

House of Vespasian

(A general unconnected with the Julian House, chosen by the Army.)

IX. Vespasian. A.D. 69-A.D. 79.

X. Titus. A.D. 79-A.D. 81. — XI. Domitian. A.D. 81-A.D. 96.
(End of the Line).

Adoptive Empire

XII. Nerva. A.D. 96-A.D. 98.

↓

Adopted XIII. Trajan. A.D. 98-A.D. 117.

↓

Virtually adopted XIV. Hadrian. A.D. 117-A.D. 138.

II

THE ROMAN CONQUEST

(*Spring of* A.D. 43 *to some time in* A.D. 122—79 *years*)

(A.) The First Stage: The Conquest of South England by Aulus Plautius

(A.D. 43–A.D. 47—4 Years)

THE Emperor Claudius appointed Aulus Plautius, a man elderly but popular with the army and a good soldier, to command the expedition to Britain. There was a strong dislike of the adventure among the troops selected, and some mutinied—perhaps from a feeling that Britain was "trans-oceanic," i.e. outside the limits of the *tidal* sea which was the boundary of their world. But the tumult was appeased, and some 150,000 men crossed the Channel (possibly again from Boulogne) in the spring of A.D. 43.

The Emperor Claudius appoints Aulus Plautius to command the campaign in Britain A.D. 43

It is probable that the army—like its predecessor under Cæsar—followed the Watling Street towards the neighbourhood of London, and therefore that the first pitched battle (in which a considerable river crossing was forced) took place on the Medway near Rochester.[1] At any rate, the forces of Caractacus and Togodumnus, the two British kings, sons of Cymbeline, who maintained the defence, fell back with loss on the Lower Thames, and crossed it. They were followed, but, though defeated again, pursued with difficulty across the Essex Marshes. Togodumnus was killed in the process of this first fighting. Caractacus survived, and with

First fighting at Rochester (?) and in Essex, Togodumnus killed

[1] The landing was upon three points.

his forces still covered Colchester, which was now the capital of his dynasty in succession to St. Albans. The Roman General sent for his Emperor (as he had been instructed to do at the climax of the struggle); Claudius came with reinforcements from Gaul, further troops, and the novelty of elephants. Caractacus was wholly and finally defeated, saved his person by flight, and took refuge in the west. Colchester was occupied and all territory north of Thames fell with it. Claudius left the island triumphant after a presence of only sixteen days. Kent submitted. Sussex (of the tribe called the Regni) was left tributary under a local king subject to the Romans, Cogidubnus, and East Anglia—Norfolk and Suffolk (of the Iceni[1])—was left tributary under a wealthy chieftain, Prasutagus: both kinglets, and perhaps nine others, submitting to the form of a subject alliance with Rome—a regular Roman arrangement of local rule.

Arrival of Claudius. Caractacus driven west

Chieftains subject and allied to Romans. Cogidubnus, King of Sussex

Claudius left Aulus Plautius in command of the new province—its first *Proprætor*, as the Roman title was for such a governor. He retained the post for four years, till A.D. 47, when the conquest of south Britain was completed. The uncertain country to the south and west was reduced by an officer who had already distinguished himself in the war: Vespasian, later to be Emperor. It is on record that he seized the Isle of Wight. It is fairly certain that "the two great tribes" whom he subdued were the people of Dorset (the Durotriges) and the Belgæ of Hampshire and Wiltshire. We may take it that he reached the Severn (for the Mendip mines were worked soon after by the Romans), and that Devon and Cornwall offered no resistance, for no garrisons were left on that border.

Vespasian conquers in Isle of Wight and the west

By A.D. 47, when Aulus Plautius came back to Rome (to enjoy the last triumph granted to a subject commander), the whole of south England was Roman land. In the

Conquest of south England completed A.D. 47

[1] Or Eceni. Cogidubnus is also spelt Cogidumnus. All these names have variants.

MAP II

POINTS IN THE ROMAN CONQUEST OF ENGLAND

Midlands Leicester was probably the outpost—there is some slight evidence of that—while the Avon on the west and some such river as the Welland or Nen on the east, may between them have provided a general covering line for the conquered south.

But it was already intended to advance Roman rule into the Midlands and north, and that task was proceeded with.

(B.) The Second Stage: Up to the Pacification of the South

(A.D. 47–A.D. 61—14 Years)

Aulus Plautius was succeeded in the Government and military occupation of Britain by Ostorius Scapula. On his taking over the command in A.D. 47, the position was this—England was under Roman rule as far west as Devon (perhaps the Exe) and to the line of the Severn, with perhaps a belt beyond; as far north as the line Avon-Ouse at least, or Avon-Welland, with a broad belt of "March" beyond, including Leicester (then called Ratae), which acted as a fortified outpost covering the Midland gap between the Avon and the Welland: for it lacked the defence of a water-line. This new province of southern Britain, the most fertile and the wealthiest part of the island, had, it seems, not the larger and neighbouring London, but Colchester for its centre of government: the capital of Essex, the inhabitants of which were then called, as we saw in Cæsar's campaign, Trinobantes.[1] Much of it was held by "alliances" with subject native kinglets: notably Sussex, as we have seen, under Cogidubnus, and East Anglia (Norfolk and Suffolk), as we have also seen, under Prasutagus. On the borders of this newly occupied district (save apparently in the Devonian peninsula) there was pressure from the native unsubdued population. The north was under the domination of Yorkshiremen: the Brigantian people, under their Queen Cartimandua. The north Welsh border was probably inhabited by a tribe called the *Decangi;* the central Welsh border certainly by the *Ordovices;* South

Ostorius Scapula given British command, A.D. 47

Cartimandua, Queen of the Brigantes

[1] Or "Trinovantes"; "b" and "v" are largely interchangeable.

Wales opposite the Broad lower Severn also certainly by the *Silures*. From all these there was danger, but especially from the *Silures*, because Caractacus (for whom the later Welsh name is "Caradoc") had fled to them after his defeat before Colchester, and was keen on continuing the war.

Caractacus in South Wales

It will be noticed that all this half-circle of peril reposed on hill country. The Brigantes under Cartimandua were backed on the Pennines; the three others—Decangi, Ordovices, and Silures—on the wild Welsh country. The Romans had made rapid way where the marching was easy and the land fertile and densely inhabited by men whose leaders had much to lose. They had been held up against the rougher, poorer, and emptier land.

The hill country in north and west stops the Roman advance

These debatable borders were raided by the outer British in the winter after Aulus Plautius' departure, and it may have been the measures taken to secure a frontier which led to disaffection in East Anglia. The men of Norfolk and Suffolk (the Iceni) raised—or some of them raised—a partial rebellion which was put down with difficulty. They took their position as "allies" seriously, and did not give it the meaning of "subject." Ostorius next pushed up north-westwards—perhaps as far as Flint—to keep back the threat from the Welsh hills; on his right the Brigantes from the Pennines threatened his communications. He turned on them and impressed them with the power of the Roman army. When he conceived that he had rendered all the rest of his border secure, he turned to the serious task of dealing with Caractacus and the Silures on the South Wales border. There was a three or four years' struggle of which we know little, save that it clearly hung doubtful and that Caractacus kept his line, his forces, and his power—not without successes in the field. But a decisive action at last put an end to the war.

The Roman task becomes more difficult

Caractacus presses the Roman armies on the Welsh border

It was probably fought on the upper waters of the Teme, near Leintwardine in Herefordshire, where tradition (and the fort of Caer Caradoc) point to the site: in the country of the

Ordovices, on the borders of the mountains. A hill position here was stormed by the Roman regulars and auxiliaries—though only with great difficulty. However, the family of Caractacus fell into their hands. Caractacus himself fled to the Brigantes, but their Queen, Cartimandua, gave him up, and he and his were brought to Rome, entering as captives in a splendid pageant. Claudius spared his life; but with his submission ends, in A.D. 51, the dynasty of Cymbeline, and the memory of an anomalous, independent Britain, for so long mixed with, but not governed by, the Roman power.

Final defeat of Caractacus, A.D. 51

At the same time Ostorius died here and was succeeded as head of the forces in Britain by Didius Gallus: he, in 58-59, by Veranius, who died in his first year of office.

Didius Gallus and Veranius, A.D. 52-59

These seven years had been filled with a peaceful but decided policy. All the Midlands were occupied, the border was pushed to the north-western port, Chester, on the one side, and to beyond Lincoln on the other. It lay, we may conjecture, along the Mersey, round by Trent to Humber; and Chester and Lincoln were its frontier garrisons: the estuaries of the Dee and the Humber its northern Ports.

Chester and Lincoln occupied

By this time, A.D. 59, Nero, the Emperor who had followed his great-uncle Claudius, had been in power at Rome five years, succeeding on Claudius' death in A.D. 54. He sent Suetonius Paulinus, one of his best generals, into Britain as Governor; and it was under him that there broke out the only serious rebellion the Roman power had to face. After it was crushed the Pacification was complete.

Nero (Emperor in A.D. 54) sends Suetonius Paulinus to Britain in A.D. 59

Suetonius had for troops four legions: all disposed on the frontiers, for he felt the south secure. The Ninth was at Lincoln, the Second at Caerleon on Usk, the Fourteenth and Twentieth he set at Chester, and with detachments from these last began a new campaign—for his first task was to attack the remains of Druidism. It was not because it was the local religion—Roman rule was indifferent to local religions, and could not be otherwise, for all Pagan antiquity took a diversity of national gods for granted. It was rather

His campaign in Anglesey

attacked as a hostile political force, and certainly as abhorrent in practice (through its use of human sacrifice especially) to the fully civilized power. Its chief centre lay far outside the pacified country, in Anglesey, to which also retired for refuge malcontents from the south. Suetonius found no difficulty in marching from Chester to the Menai Straits: he crossed them with his army in lighters, destroyed the opposing force, cut down the sacred groves, and left a garrison.

While he was ordering Anglesey he got a message with appalling news from the south. The Iceni (of Norfolk and Suffolk) had risen and a general rebellion had begun.

The great rebellion of A.D. 60 in Norfolk and Suffolk

The cause of that disaster was misgovernment. Suetonius, the *Legatus* of the Emperor, the military chief, had with him, to overlook civil administration, a civilian *procurator*, one Catus Decianus, who was permanently in office at Camulodunum (Colchester). This official pushed the fiscal capacity of the province to its limit, rigorously exacting the full taxes, and he carried out confiscations on pleas probably legal but certainly intolerable. He insisted on the return of gifts made to British notables by Claudius in the former reign. The British nobles were thus impoverished, and a spirit of disaffection spread rapidly among the leaders of all the rich corn country between Thames and the Wash. To this was added the action of the Spaniard Seneca, at that time Nero's minister in Rome, and one of the wealthiest senators. He had invested a large fortune [1] in the new province, probably lent for the most part to settlers to develop the country. He chose this dangerous moment to resettle his investments and to call in his British loans. This started financial difficulties all round, ultimately affecting many more than the original borrowers, and the new trouble came on a population to whom the retired soldiers and other foreigners in Colchester had made themselves obnoxious by their contempt of the natives, while the priests

[1] About £80,000 worth of gold. But it meant far more then.

of the new great Temple of Claudius and Rome in that city had earned a special unpopularity from their harshness in the collection of their revenues. All this was bad enough in Essex, where Roman rule had once been welcomed, but on the top of it came the provocation of the *Iceni* in Norfolk and Suffolk, whose status of "allies," and whose nominal local kingship, was their pride.

Prasutagus, the old and wealthy "allied" king of the Iceni, had died; he left the Emperor his great fortune with his two daughters as co-heirs: a common device for the safeguarding of an inheritance. What followed we do not exactly know. Perhaps the Royal Family protested against the Emperor's share, or perhaps the local authorities encroached upon the family's portion. Anyhow, there was bad friction and, as an attempt at overcoming it, terrorism. Boadicea (whom many moderns have absurdly renamed "Boudicca"),[1] the Queen-widow, was beaten, her daughters outraged, and East Anglia given over to rapine. The Iceni rose, even the Essex men; the Trinobantes, so long friendly to Rome, rose with them; the rebels sacked Colchester (which was unwalled, but in which the great temple held out a few days), massacred wholesale, and prepared to march on London, 120,000 strong.[2] Meanwhile Suetonius was hurrying south with the small force at his command: portions of

[1] It is always affected and absurd to abandon a traditional title, known to all, for a pretendedly more accurate one. It is like calling Paris "Paree." But, in this case, there is no excuse. Our authority is Tacitus ("Annals," xiv. 31, 35, and 37). Our texts derive from two MSS. In the best of these the spelling is "Boudicea." In the other, variously "Boodicia," "Boudicca," and "Bouducea." No one knows what the name really was. Dion later gives various spellings, or rather, the very late abridgement does so.

[2] A good example of the large population of Britain at the time; 120,000 freemen armed and marching means at least half a million free inhabitants, and this in a slave-holding society means certainly more than a million total inhabitants between the Thames and the Wash alone: probably far more, for many would hold back, and many were necessary for the work at home (though it is true that much field work was abandoned), and no sudden levy raised in a few days gets anything like a full conscript recruitment. Indeed, by the time of the battle they had risen according to Dion's much later exaggeration to 230,000.

Suetonius marches to London with part of one legion, the Twentieth, and of the Fourteenth

the Twentieth Legion and Fourteenth *gemina*. He sent a dispatch to Poenius Postumus, the general commanding the Second Legion at Caerleon on Usk in South Wales, bidding him march east to effect a junction at London, and himself, with about 10,000 men, reached that town, intending to make it the base of his operations.

The Ninth Legion from Lincoln is destroyed on its way to join him. The Second fails to move from Wales

But his expected concentration failed him. Of the Roman forces in the island, four legions, he had none but his own detachment. The Ninth Legion, at Lincoln, was led south by its General, Petilius Cerialis, intercepted by the insurgents, and destroyed; only the commander and his cavalry got away. The Second at Caerleon had not moved. Poenius had shirked the responsibility of leaving the Silurian border unguarded, had disobeyed orders, and remained at Caerleon on Usk.

Suetonius stands somewhere north of London and wins a decisive action

With his small body Suetonius could not hold London. He left it, doubling back (probably) northwards, and so obtaining some reinforcements from his garrisons based on Chester. The British force sacked London and St. Albans, massacring the Roman settlers and their allies, and came on Suetonius in a position the latter had prepared in a defile where his small force (less than one-twentieth, perhaps, of his enemies) could feel its flanks secure. The site is unfortunately quite lost. In the action which followed the British charge failed, and the Romans were wholly victorious; 80,000 of the rebels were killed. The loss of the disciplined Roman wedge was not a tenth of those engaged, and the success was complete. Poenius, who had failed his leader, killed himself.

The revolt crushed

All danger of further armed revolt was ended. But there was still peril of famine, and the province was half ruined as well as sullen. The three main cities of the south—Colchester, St. Albans, and London—had been wrecked, and 70,000 Roman settlers and their dependents murdered.

A wise policy of amnesty secures peace, A.D. 61

Nero acted wisely. He sent 7000 men from the Rhine frontier to fill the gap left by the destruction of the Ninth

Legion, and dispatched, to replace Catus (who had fled to Gaul), one Julius Classicianus as procurator. The latter opposed the military policy of Suetonius (who wanted further repression and execution), and was supported in this by a further emissary of Nero's, a former slave of his, Polycletus, who reported in favour of the milder civilian policy. Suetonius was recalled on the pretext that a few ships under his command had been lost, but really because his soldierly roughness was thought dangerous. Petronius Turpilianus was sent in his place with instructions of a milder sort, and the pacification completed in that same year, A.D. 61.

(C.) The End of the Conquest

(A.D. 61–A.D. 120—(22) 59 Years)

Trebellius Maximus sent to command in Britain, A.D. 63–A.D. 70

To succeed Petronius as Commander in Britain and chief official, Nero sent Trebellius Maximus. He was a weak man. The discipline of the army was relaxed under his rule, and, in the end, after a sort of compromise between himself and his command, which left to his subordinates an undue licence, he went over sea. But this interval of loose government (lasting some ten years) was not disturbed. The Roman hold on south England grew stronger, the Roman civilization deeper. After the violent civil commotion which followed the suicide of Nero (in June, A.D. 68), Vespasian (the same whom we saw serving with Aulus Plautius and against the Silures in his youth) was acclaimed Emperor; first by his own troops in the east (where he was conducting the war against the Jews), later in Rome. He was secure in A.D. 69, though he had to fight rivals till A.D. 71. Three names appear in the list of emperors between Nero and Vespasian: Galba, Otho, and Vitellius—three rival generals. But they were all killed in the course of A.D. 68 and 69.

Accession of the Emperor Vespasian, A.D. 69

Vespasian a new type of Emperor: the army now fully governing

The new Emperor's accession to power makes a turning point in the history of Rome and of the world, for (1) he owed his elevation, not to high social position—the foundation of the earlier emperors (who had all acceded as members of one great family, the Julian)—but to the army alone; and (2) in his time Jerusalem was taken and destroyed and a new chapter opened in the history of the Catholic Church. But of that I must write later. For the moment we are only concerned with the British action of Vespasian.

That strong soldier saw at once to the order of Britain. He first, in 71, sent over as Commander Petilius Cerialis, the man who had led the Ninth Legion down from Lincoln to its disaster against Boadicea. That good general began the occupation of the north, half conquered the Yorkshiremen (Brigantes): perhaps garrisoned York. Next, in 75, came Julius Frontinus, who settled the Silurian resistance in three years, and ended the menace on that south-Welsh frontier. Next, in 78, Vespasian sent the great AGRICOLA, who, partly through his own merit, but more from the genius of his son-in-law, the historian Tacitus, has become one of the main figures of English history.

Petilius Cerialis sent to govern Britain, A.D. 71

Then Julius Frontinus in A.D. 75

AGRICOLA, A.D. 78

Gnæus Julius Agricola landed in Britain late in the summer of A.D. 78.[1] His administration marks the full settlement of the province.

He was in the prime of life (about forty), a Roman noble, born and brought up in southern France. He had seen military service in Britain under Suetonius as a young man, and may have been present in the great battle against Boadicea. He had returned later to command—or restore order in—the Twentieth Legion at Chester during Trebellius' lax rule; he had held many important offices, including, quite lately, the Governorship of Aquitaine. He decided upon immediate campaigns to occupy the whole island, and first, late as it was in the season, marched against the Ordovices of the North-Midwales border, who had recently raided and cut up a squadron of Roman cavalry. He routed and half-destroyed that clan, marched through Denbighshire to the Menai Straits (beyond which Anglesey had been abandoned, since the great rebellion in the south), and it is significant of how the tone and habit of Roman rule had spread in Britain, that when a few soldiers *swam* the Straits (in the absence of transports) Anglesey immediately submitted.

[1] or 77. The evidence from the text is not clear, but it is one of these two years. The dates I give to Agricola's action presuppose A.D. 78 for his accession to local power. If the true date be 77, all others must be pre-dated by one year.

Agricola's object in this preliminary campaign was probably to stamp his governorship from its outset with a mark of energy, and to rouse not only the army, which had slackened in the long peace, but also the civilian political officials, who had fallen into routine and tended, as all men do when they are not ruled from above, to corruption.

He set about to do two things essential to the consolidation of Roman power.

The Roman civilization spreads rapidly under Agricola

First, he spread civilization, and especially the *city* civilization, of Rome as much as possible; secondly, he put the administration on a sound, because a just, basis. He greatly accelerated the Romanizing process by familiarizing the leaders of the British population with town life, the Roman speech and habit, and Roman buildings. He set up a kind of friendly rivalry between the native born and the still alien rulers.

His efforts bore fruit rapidly, and the new order of a full civilization became normal to the great mass of the people. The populations mingled and England became one. It was to remain one for all the Roman centuries. It lost its unity in the chaos of the earlier Dark Ages: it recovered that unity with the ninth century and has since maintained it.

At the same time, Agricola re-settled the economic burden of the country. The imperial tax, called the *tributum*—paid in money—had already begun to suffer, with the lapse of time, from inequalities. He re-settled it upon a more exact and juster basis. More important than this, by way of pacifying and developing the country, was his action towards the *annona*, that is, the rations for the army which the provinces were bound to provide in kind.

Agricola's reform of the *annona*

It was not a heavy burden. A country of many millions had only to support the equivalent of what we should call to-day two mobilized divisions or so; in numbers, say, thirty to forty thousand men (it is true that there were also their camp followers and the auxiliaries). At any rate, the total amount of wheat and of lesser contributions was small in

proportion to the resources of the province. The danger was that, like all agricultural burdens, it should tend to monstrous disproportion between one assessment and another; for agriculture is the most complex of all industries, and, at the same time, it is that in which the cost of transport in material varies most. Routine, the lapse of time, had caused the machinery for gathering these provisions to get out of gear. For instance, a particular district, say the open land east of Lincoln, would be registered to supply the Ninth Legion garrisoned at Lincoln town. When the Ninth Legion moved northward to York the plan would remain unchanged. While the plain of York might be supplying some other distant garrison such as Chester, the Lincoln district would be expected to transport its stuff right up to York. Again, local dealers would buy up the harvest. When the grain was later required for rations the Treasury did not come down upon these purchasers, but upon the original farmers, who had to go to the dealers and buy back their own corn at a higher price, under the pressure of the tax-gatherer. Agricola set himself to remedy both kinds of abuse, and at the end of six years he seems to have got the whole province into order.

Agricola attempts to hold the whole island

His other preoccupation was the settlement and garrisoning of the *whole* island. In this he was not—one might almost say he could not be—successful; but he came very near to success, and, most remarkable of all, he attempted to make of all the British islands, including Ireland, one system. Had he succeeded or been allowed by Rome to do this the whole of our history, not only British but European, would have been changed: and how much for the better!

He proceeded by the following steps.

He garrisons the north, A.D. 79

In his second campaign (the first, as we have seen, was in North Wales), in the summer of A.D. 79, he established garrisons all over the north country, in the territory of Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Durham, the dominant power in which was the great Brigantian people, issuing from, and

depending for refuge upon, the difficult country of the Pennines.

Agricola in that year and the following permanently fortified these smaller garrisons, and thus put an end to that see-saw of advances in summer and retirements in winter which had hitherto marked the border. He gave every post a year's reserve supply, and very skilfully chose the sites of each stronghold. As his biographer tells us, not one was ever given up.

As far as the Tay, A.D. 80

In the next year, A.D. 80, he pushed forward the occupation—the settling of outposts—as far as some estuary which has come down to us in the manuscript under the form "Tanaum." Probably this was the Tay. But unfortunately we know nothing certain about this British site, nor, indeed, about other important ones of the period, partly because our authority, Tacitus, was indifferent to geography.[1]

The Scotch Campaign of A.D. 81

The next, the fourth campaigning season, the summer of 81, he threw a fortified chain of some kind across the island from Clyde to Forth—"Cloda" and "Bodotria."[2] Tacitus

[1] The arguments in favour of Tanaum's meaning, the Tay, are very strong; although the old reading Taunum, which would make them stronger, is wrong. The main argument is that the boundary was evidently a marked one establishing a limit, but as he had already occupied the north of England, the Tyne cannot be meant, and hardly the Tweed; to which two rivers, moreover, the term "estuary" hardly applies. It cannot be the Firth of Forth, because that is mentioned under a different name shortly afterwards, and there seems nothing but the Tay to choose. However, we cannot be absolutely certain on so late a text (there is no MSS. earlier than a thousand years after Tacitus wrote), and we only have to suppose a "u" for an "n" to make the conjecture the more likely in form. At any rate, if it is not the Tay, no one can say where it is. There is a characteristic piece of German stupidity (with the great name of Mommsen behind it), which has fixed upon a little brook just north of the border as the "Estuary"! Yet another argument in favour of the Tay is the fact that a good soldier would certainly have reconnoitred far beyond the line which he meant to establish, and, as we know that he established a line between Clyde and Forth it is common-sense to accept the next estuary northward as the limit of his reconnaissances.

[2] Bodotria is clearly the same word as Forth. With both the initial labial and the final dental soft it is one of the first examples of that continuity in place-names which is the mark of the continuity of English history. Much earlier ones still, of course, are Kent, Colchester, Dorset, Devon, London, as also the names of the rivers Thames, Severn, Dee—and a host of others.

uses with regard to this consolidation of the frontier between Clyde and Forth a remarkable and accurate phrase: "Thus cutting off Scotland to the north of the isthmus, into a separate island, as it were." Which it is—for the isthmus is only one very long forced march across (just over 30 miles from navigable water to navigable water), and it is one of the numerous proofs of Agricola's military talent that he at once seized the opportunity it afforded before any general survey had been made, without maps[1] and by a mere "eye for country."

Agricola desires to occupy Ireland

In the next year, 82, he crossed the western sea, *perhaps* to Ireland, perhaps only to one of the Scottish promontories, at any rate, to some point where no Roman official had yet penetrated; and whether it was on the shore of Ireland or not that he set foot, he certainly desired to push the administration of Rome into that country. He dwelt on that policy continually in his later conversation, and would say that, with one legion, and provided he brought all the auxiliaries at his command, he could have added it to the Roman dominion. Apparently the central Government would not allow him to do so.

He is not allowed to do so

The attempted conquest of the Highlands, begun in A.D. 83

In the summer of 83 he began that conquest of the extreme north which had always lain at the back of his mind, and was the necessary completion of his scheme for holding the whole of the island of Britain. He marched north to the Firth of Forth, but apparently his force was not sufficient, or perhaps his very long communications grew insecure. The Ninth Legion, which he had with him, was surprised in its camp in the night, very badly mauled, and only saved by a counter attack with fresh troops, which Agricola brought up just in time; but though the situation was saved, the army, which had been reluctant to advance, changed in mood and clamoured for a victorious campaign

[1] I do not mean that the ancients had no maps. They must have had maps, and good ones. But there can have been as yet no maps of unoccupied Scotland. Yet the general shape of the island was well known.

that might hold the whole of Caledonia. He had not, nor had apparently his generals, a proper conception of the wild land into which they proposed to advance. And here we must note again how the division of Britain into mountain and plain affected the whole Roman occupation, as it also affected all our later history down to 1745. Civilization hardly cared to, and never effectively did, occupy the mountain land. It flowed, I say, like a sea up to the base of the Pennines, the Welsh mountains, and the Scottish Highlands, but it left those hills only half influenced.

Battle of the Grampian Hill

It was in the campaign season of 84 that the attempt was made and the advance carried to some site now lost, known apparently to contemporaries as the Grampian, or Graupian Hill,[1] and to us unknown. The action was violent, the Roman success locally complete. The Caledonians, under a leader Caldacus, lost 10,000 killed: the Roman army admitted only 360; perhaps this does not include the losses of the native and auxiliary forces. But the remarkable thing about the action is that though the hold on southern Scotland appears to have remained secure, and although Agricola followed his victory up by ordering the circumnavigation of the coast, it was clearly impossible to go further, and the Highlands remained unRomanized; which omission has been felt in history with an effect only less than the refusal to Romanize Ireland. For it was on account of the Roman failure to subdue the Highlands, that, when Roman Britain continued as the Britain of the Dark Ages from St. Augustine to Edward the Confessor, Scotland,

[1] The name of the hill or hills from which the Caledonian battle was named has led to endless discussion. When first the manuscript, *now lost*, was printed (in 1475 to 1480) it appeared as "Mons Gra*m*pius"; but we know that this printer made mistakes. The spelling in the only two manuscripts we *now* have is "Gra*u*pius." But these MSS. are exceedingly late. They are of the fifteenth century, and from a fifteenth century original. The conclusion is that we are in doubt on the original form of the name, and had better stick to the traditional "Grampian." The site of the battle is equally uncertain. It is evidently somewhere on the Highland border along the east coast lowlands, probably of Aberdeenshire. Nearer than that we cannot get.

under Highland kings, developed into an independent State.

Agricola had, by this year, A.D. 84, occupied the chief command in Britain much longer than any predecessor, and had probably had his term of governorship extended on account of his evident vigour and success. In Rome the sons of Vespasian, Titus, and after him his brother Domitian, had succeeded. It may have been that the jealousy of the latter (it was but a few years since a victorious army had given the empire to a new family) prompted him to recall Agricola from Britain ; but when we consider the length of his term in Britain we may accept a simpler explanation. At any rate, whatever the reason, at the end of A.D. 84 Agricola was recalled.

A Survey of the Church in the Roman World at the Moment when England was Completely Absorbed and Civilized

At this point—the year A.D. 84—we must interrupt the story of Britain to survey the general state of the Roman world, and particularly of the Catholic Church which was destined to become its driving power and principle of continuity.

That world was rapidly settling into a complete social order. No one living could remember the long generations of devastating civil wars which had closed with the accession of Augustus more than a century before. Roman law and administration were unquestioned throughout civilized Europe from the Syrian and African deserts to the Atlantic, the Rhine, and the Grampians. Roman commerce, using one coinage, and Roman measurements, were universal. As to languages, the east used Greek, the west Latin. The wealthy governing and highly educated class used both tongues, as we have seen, almost indifferently. Local tongues

survived as dialects; "Celtic" ones in the north-west as in Britain, Germanic in the Netherlands and along the Rhine; Punic, and we know not what Kabyle tongues, in North Africa; Semitic forms in the Levant; Egyptian in the Nile Valley. But all the culture of the day, and a rapidly increasing part of its common speech, was Greek and Latin. On the borders (North Britain, the German Rhineland, the Danube, etc.), there was some slight pressure from the barbarians desiring to enjoy the wealth of the empire without suffering its discipline; but these were easily restrained, and gave a regular supply of slaves, as yet a much smaller supply of auxiliary troops, to the society of civilized men. The world of Europe was one and virtually at peace. Its great bond was the splendid army of Rome. Its monarch, the Commander-in-Chief.

In such a unity one anomalous body, and one alone, could be found. It was the Catholic Church.

This corporation, the origins of which we remarked a lifetime before, under Tiberius, was now spread throughout the whole Empire from east to west. Though forming as yet but a small proportion of the people it was, from its strict organization, its intense vitality, and its sharp difference from the society in which it lived, at once a growing power and a strong irritant. Already it was loved and hated with a violence of emotion which have marked its relations ever since. Its centre was in Rome, where Peter, the chief of the apostolic college (the original foundation), having fixed his authority, his successors still held it. But every city of consequence (and already many also of little note) had its Christian organism, called in each its "Ecclesia" or "Church," which term was also employed for the whole congeries of such societies. Each of these city "cells" or units of the Christian network was under the control of an *Episcopos*—a title

taken from the Mysteries,[1] and meaning a governor and moderator of the same. Each *Episcopos* (who had his powers from the imposition of hands by his predecessors in the order), continued the function of the original Eleven Founders, was essentially a chief Priest having full mysterious powers to perform the Sacrifice of the Eucharist, and was assisted—in places of any size at least—by a larger or smaller number of other subordinate Priests[2] called " Seniors," that is, " superiors," by their title, who also possessed such powers and could be created by the *Episcopos* alone. The *Ecclesia*, that is, Church, had a jealously guarded life : its order was largely secret. It was still entered, as at the beginning, after instruction in, and acceptance of, its doctrines by a ceremony of initiation—Baptism in the Name of God Three and One.

It is no wonder that such a definite body, so organized for survival by silence where silence was necessary, by zeal always ready for death, by a complex yet exact system of government, *especially by a new system of morals* (wherein it contrasted violently with the Pagan religious societies around it), and all this separate from (and indifferent to) the ordinary and open arrangement of society, should excite hostility, both general in the mass and particular in the government.

For the masses, the aloofness of this new and strange body, its strict creed and code, its hatred of evils tolerated (even where condemned) by other men, was a sufficient cause of anger against it ; to which anger its high and

[1] The expression of religion in this period, the end of the first century, had long been through secret societies, each with its dramatic symbols of spiritual things, its ritual, its officers and organizations, its initiatory ceremonies, and its scheme of purification and spiritual objects. These societies were called by the Greek name of *Mysteria*, from the word for shutting the eyes or mouth : implying the possession of a secret.

[2] It seems probable that the *Episcopos* was originally the only priest of each place. *Episcopos* is, of course, our " Bishop."

largely secret organization added. But still more did its *dogmatic* character offend. Where others were content with discussed opinion and easy difference, it affirmed at white heat the absolute truth of its doctrine, and scorned and opposed all else. The religious emotion in Pagans was satisfied with symbols and practices. Pagan mysteries were plays and showings forth, Pagan gods were indifferently ideas, or pictures in the mind, or a local habit. The Christian mysteries were affirmed to be *real:* the Christian God was at once the sole Creator, excluding all other deities, and yet also (incomprehensible confusion to the profane!) an actual Man; nay, a criminal—executed in Syria within living memory.

Partly in response to this popular hatred, much more because it would not tolerate a power independent of the State, the Empire was hostile to this new Corporation, often attacking it directly by prosecution in its courts and heavy—even capital—punishments. Most of its original founders had thus perished, and notably, in Rome, under Nero in A.D. 64, Peter, the first local bishop and head of the apostolic college; Paul, his great colleague, who had been the chief missionary of the earliest expansion. Both of their martyred bodies were venerated in the capital of the world.

But the thing grew. The Jewish surroundings, amid which it had so strangely emerged, were rapidly shed, and the Church, within a lifetime of its origin, was a European thing. Later the separation was confirmed by a catastrophe. The Jews, having risen against Rome under Nero, were destroyed as a nation, and their race, scattered throughout the Empire, nourished an especial hatred of the Christians, with whose prophecies they associated their political disaster. Every devout Jew recited after A.D. 88 daily a prayer cursing by name the Nazarenes. Their continued wealth

and influence greatly aided in sustaining the animosity of the public against the Church.

By this date (A.D. 84) the witnesses of the Founding, the contemporaries of the Christian God-on-Earth, God-and-Man, were grown old or were dead. One of the original eleven—the youngest, John—still lived on at Ephesus. The rest had fallen. But the institution grew unceasingly.

We must read the story of any Roman province—Britain among the rest—from A.D. 84 onwards, with the presence constantly in our mind of the Catholic Church, spreading outward in new communities from the Mediterranean; appearing in this and that remote town as a group of a dozen men, of a score, fifty, a hundred; as swelling in the main towns from a hundredth of the population to a twentieth, a tenth—and still advancing. So it was to continue; till after one more century it was to be the strongest field of action and thought, and after two to transform the world.

This survey concluded, we return to the succession of English events.

For some years after the recall of Agricola nothing seems to have happened in England sufficiently striking to impress the Empire as worthy of a special record, or even to establish a legend. At the centre, at Rome, Vespasian's family lost its power with the murder of his last son, Domitian. Nerva, a man elderly, esteemed, of no connection with the last group of emperors, was chosen and acclaimed: he was of good birth, of important legal descent.

Nerva Emperor, A.D. 96

He lived not eighteen months beyond his accession (from September, A.D. 96, to January, A.D. 98), but in that short space his intelligence achieved something of capital importance. He founded the *Adoptive Succession*.

The vast Roman world needed a monarch. An emperor, a sole head for its instrument of government, the army, was

The new and successful mode of choosing emperors: the Adoptive Succession

a necessity. But who should be emperor? No society can live without authority; it is the very principle of life. *Why* should this or that man be obeyed—what was his title? At first—after single rule had become inevitable—the family connections of the great founder, Julius Cæsar, had held power for more than a century. But active military rule is ill suited to mere hereditary succession, for hereditary succession may (and does) put incompetence in direction of soldiers. On Nero's suicide the military instinct of the army called a competent soldier, of good but not exalted birth, to supreme command—that was Vespasian. But the opportunity of continuing military choice was missed. Vespasian made the thing hereditary again by securing the succession for his sons Titus and Domitian. The latter ruined his house.

Nerva, much more wisely, created a new system. He deliberately chose as his adopted heir the most competent of the men prominent in military command—Trajan, a general of no origin, the son of a common soldier who had risen from the ranks and had trained his son to the rigour of arms. That conception of a deliberate choice, an adoption, was the saving of the Roman Empire. Adoption lasted for less than a hundred years. The tendency to a dynasty, to a father's favouring his son for the succession, at last proved too strong; but for the moment things were saved—and it was a vital moment. It was the moment in which the universal rule of Rome had become familiar throughout the ancient world, when good government was essential to its consolidation and rooting.

Trajan Emperor, A.D. 98

Trajan, succeeding in January, 98, lived to the year 117. He signalled for the succession, probably he actually named in his last days, another man, a relation, but chosen for his value and in the fullness of his vigour—Hadrian. Hadrian, though half an artist, a man too avid for life and somewhat corrupt in soul, took on his military command as a great task, and lent great energy to the confirming of the State.

He abandoned recently-held territory in the east, which he felt insecure; he repressed the tribes beyond the Danube; he readjusted the taxes; he undertook a series of great journeys to see for himself the condition of the provinces and to settle their state.

Hadrian in Britain, A.D. 120-22

Of these journeys, one—of which the date cannot be exactly fixed, but which is not earlier than A.D. 120 nor later than A.D. 122—was a peregrination of Britain.

Some think that a recent revolt of the Brigantes moved him. There is no trace of it: the guess is based on nothing more than the disappearance of Legion IX from the lists of the Roman army, and its replacement (at York) by Legion VI.

Hadrian's Wall

But the visit produced a memory of him in the bridging of the Tyne at Newcastle, and in our chief remaining monument of the Empire, the Wall from Tyne to Solway. Here there must have been a chain of forts, there may have been some earlier trench and parapet. But it was Hadrian who here established a permanent line. It was restored later, partly rebuilt. But Hadrian is the author of the idea and the thing: at once a limit, a check and a declaration of policy. It fixed the mark within which he desired the permanent Roman organization of the island to lie.[1] Seventy-three miles of stone-work some 17 feet high, with a garrison of some 10,000 men,[2] with fifteen fixed camps at an easy march one from the other, with guarded posts at every mile and two lesser intermediary stations between each such post, with a double ditch and a rampart, it formed one

[1] Or one might put it thus. Everything south of Clyde and Forth was civilized and Roman. It remained Roman indefinitely for four centuries. But the Borderland between the Scottish lowland plain and the Carlisle and Northumberland plains was very broad and uninhabited, and if the line between Clyde and Forth was broken, there was no rallying point behind. So Hadrian, always on the cautious side, established the *permanent* second line, Solway-Tyne.

[2] When fully occupied. But the Wall was not a defensive position: it was rather a frontier.

of the chief monuments of Roman genius. It is a resurrection of Rome to stand by its ruins to-day.

With that achievement the full Romanization of England ends. From thenceforward England has been, and remains, an inseparable unit of that Western European civilization which is still, and shall always be, the head of the world : which is still, under the surface, " The Empire."

III

England Governed from Rome

A.D. 122–410

288 Years

SUCCESSION OF ROMAN EMPERORS

The Antonine Peace

(A.D. 122-A.D. 193)

XIVth Emperor. HADRIAN.
Died A.D. 138.
Adopts
↓
XVth Emperor. ANTONINUS PIUS.
Died A.D. 161.
Adopts
↓
XVIth Emperor. MARCUS AURELIUS.
Died A.D. 180.
Names his son
↓
XVIIth Emperor. COMMODUS.
Murdered A.D. 192.
(End of the Antonines.)

Marcus Aurelius unfortunately attempts to found a dynasty, and leaves the Empire to his worthless son Commodus.

A year's confusion. On the death of Commodus three generals, commanding (1) in *Britain* (Albinus), (2) in the *East* (Niger), and (3) on the *Danube* (Septimius Severus), are rival claimants, each nominated by his own troops. The *Senate* attempts to assert itself by nominating PERTINAX, who is counted as a Roman Emperor, but is murdered by the soldiers. These put up the place of emperor for sale. It is bought by DIDIUS, but he is put to death by *Septimius Severus*, who arrives in Rome and is acclaimed Emperor.

SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS. A.D. 193.

III

ENGLAND GOVERNED FROM ROME

(A.) The Second Century: The Antonine Peace (A.D. 122–193—71 Years)

FROM Hadrian's presence in Britain to the death of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius in 180 A.D. is the active lifetime of a man: just under sixty years. Inception of the Antonine period of order

Some few of the very youngest officers of Hadrian's army just survived to see the change following on the death of Marcus. This interval was of high moment in the history of our civilization, for it was the climax of that system of government which gave security and splendour to the Roman world. That world was founded on the army, and the army was united and strong everywhere under its successive commanders-in-chief, because these emperors were deliberately chosen for their aptitude.

Hadrian, at the very close of his life, adopted, for his merit, Antoninus Pius, who succeeded, as a man already middle-aged, on Hadrian's death in A.D. 138. Antoninus adopted in similar fashion—though he chose him in early youth, at seventeen—Marcus Aurelius Verus, married him to his daughter, and trained him to office. When Antoninus died, Marcus, then a man of forty and full of experience in government, succeeded, in A.D. 161, and reigned till his death in A.D. 180 over a world still in full benefit of that system of adoption to which he owed his own state. Hadrian adopts Antoninus Pius and he Marcus Aurelius

Had Marcus behaved with virility and judgment, had he continued the tradition of Nerva and chosen a successor for Reign and character of Marcus Aurelius

character, the chain of prosperity and of unquestioned order throughout all civilized Europe might have remained unbroken. But Marcus was weak. His dull philosophy (so often used as a weapon against the Church), his pedantry, his submission to a detestable wife, his morbid preoccupation with his inward troubles, were the proofs of a mind unworthy of his position, though painstaking and sincere. He yielded to family doting, sacrificed to it the Roman State, and closed the Period of Peace by the folly of attempting to found a dynasty. His worthless son, Commodus, succeeded. This son, after a reign of thirteen years, without plan or consecution, and of increasing caprice and tyranny, was murdered in 192, and the adoptive scheme which had served Rome through its greatest century was in ruins.

He foolishly tries to found a dynasty

This Antonine period of security and order welded England finally and entirely into the world of civilization. It became wholly Roman in law, measurements, coinage, commerce, and ideas. It was now an inseparable part of Roman Europe. But in two things Britain differed from any other part of the Empire, and these two differences have affected all its development from that day to this : (1) it was not only distant, but it was separated from the Mediterranean world by a tidal and difficult sea ; (2) it was Roman in but a portion of its area. One clear geographical unit, the British Isles, was not held as one clear Roman unit. Only part of that geographical unit was organized as a political unit, and that part was an extremity of the Empire. Ireland was untouched ; the Scottish Highlands only once visited ; the main fortified line, from Carlisle to Newcastle, cut the main island in two.

England different from the rest of the Empire by distance, insularity, and large barbaric area

The situation was imperfect ; the effects of imperfection were lasting. Everywhere else the pressure of the barbarian, the peril of raids across the frontiers of civilization, was met by fully civilized, *continuous* land, across which ample forces could march at once. Even where mountainous and barren districts (as in the Alpine belt) made roads rare, bases and

full continuous land communication lay close behind. But the British Isles were cut off by the sea, and, within them, all Ireland lay untouched by Rome, the Scotch Highlands were almost untouched, the Welsh hills but lightly occupied, the border belt between Tyne and Forth, Clyde and Solway, insecurely ; while, right down into the heart of the province, from the Scotch borderland to the Peak, ran a broad ridge of wild Pennine moorland and its offshoot, westward and to the north, the Lakes. All the wild country, so long as it forbore to raid, went its way.

Hence more exposed to raids

Thus it was that tongues not Roman so largely survived in these islands—mainly Celtic ; perhaps here and there, on the east coasts, Teutonic. Thus it was that every relaxation of order brought with it the invasion of Britain on some scale, and that the final breakdown of central government from distant Rome led at last—but only after many centuries of a high civilization—to the increasing decline of A.D. 400-A.D. 600.

Hence also survival of local dialects, Celtic and perhaps Teutonic

How wise was Agricola, who at the outset, when it might still have been accomplished, proposed a complete conquest of the whole group of islands !

. . . . . .

The great period of order and security from Trajan to Marcus Aurelius did many things which affected all civilization and Britain with it. We must appreciate these to follow the story of England in the second century. It formed a soil wherein the Catholic Church, though periodically attacked, took solid root—a growing body throughout the Empire. It established a firm tradition of local, provincial administration, the main lines of which, perpetually transferred, has lasted to our own day.[1] It completed the

The Antonine peace (1) affords opportunity

[1] Thus the *County* (*Comitatus*) is the old local sub-unit, the "Civitas," organized at the very last of the Roman Empire under a *Comes*, of whom the sheriff is to-day the direct descendant in England.

MAP III

Roman System of
Roads in Britain
Many no doubt Pre-Roman in origin
Roman ports □ LYNN
0 10 20 30 40 50
Miles
THE WALL
BERWICK
NEWCASTLE
CARLISLE
Penrith
Ambleside
LANCASTER
PRESTON
Wigan
Manchester
Doncaster
Lincoln
CARNARVON
CHESTER
Buxton
Derby
Wroxeter
Leicester
Stamford
LYNN
Norwich
DUNWICH
Cambridge
Worcester
Stratford
Carmarthen
Gloucester
Monmouth
Neath
Cirencester
Dorchester
St. Albans
COLCHESTER
Chelmsford
LONDON
BRISTOL
Bath
Silchester
Maidstone
Canterbury
RICHBORO
Winchester
SOUTHAMPTON
PORTCHESTER
CHICHESTER
Dorking
LYMPNE
DOVER
Axminster
EXETER
Dorchester
POOLE
LYME REGIS
WEYMOUTH
Portsmouth
Brighton
PEVENSEY
III

network of great roads from Alexandria to Glasgow, from Cadiz to Cologne.[1] It affected the army.

for growth of the Church, completes the road system of the Empire, and establishes for ever our European conception of local administration

The army, which was to the very end the soul of that world, had begun as a body of Italians: Roman citizens, organized in *Legions*, regulars. To these had later been added auxiliary troops: recruited from within and even from without the Empire. These increased in numbers after the first conquest of Gaul, just before the Christian era, until they became, in 300 years, more numerous than the regulars, and even more efficient. The army had been commanded by emperors of the Julian house for a hundred years—from Augustus to Nero—until the great change which brought in Vespasian emphasized the wholly military character of the State, and gave a soldier of the middle class pre-eminence over the great families. From Vespasian's time onwards the officers are less and less chosen from the gentry—an important point; even more important, the recruiting of the rank and file among the regulars changes in character: it is less and less Italian. A regular soldier, a member of a legion, must still be a Roman citizen; but he may come from anywhere—and he may be a citizen on joining. All through the second century the change goes on. The irregulars and auxiliaries increase in proportion to the legions. The legions themselves get fixed for long periods in one place. The time-expired men get land in the provinces. The active soldiers marry in the provinces. Their sons furnish an increasing proportion of the local effectives. The army becomes more and more (1) professional; (2) connected with barbaric (and other) auxiliaries; (3) regional. A British group of legions becomes, at last, an army mainly of British blood, though keeping the old

It also (2) gradually transforms the army which

changes in command and recruitment

and becomes (1) professional; (2) more barbaric; (3) local

[1] These Roman roads seem to have made a more complete system in England than anywhere else, and we have more evident remains of them than has any other part of the Roman Empire. All our later roads descend from, and are only the modification of, the Roman road system, the map of which, opposite, gives certainly *less* than the total, as new fragments are discovered every year.

foreign name of certain units. At the end of the second century—in 193—an historian can talk of the army quartered in Britain as "British," and allude, almost as though it were a national thing, to its particular temper compared with that of the army in other provinces; and all the while men are becoming familiar with irregular troops of barbaric (largely German) origin and speech, under their own leaders, settled within Roman land.

The army never becomes entirely fixed to localities. Great marches to and fro go on till the very end of the full Imperial system, and there is occasional transference of permanent garrisons. There is continual change of garrison for the hired foreign auxiliaries. But the regulars are strongly localized, even before the second century closes (A.D. 200), and this is especially true of England.

This especially true of army in England

All this we must bear in mind as we follow the record of England between the departure of Hadrian and the coming of Severus.

. . . . . .

British local governors or legates after 122

Between Hadrian's pacification of Britain and his death we have mention of three governors, Falco, immediately after, in 124; Platorius Nepos; and at some later time, administrating up to 134, Sextus Severus. All three were officials who had had similar experience elsewhere—in Asia (Falco), in Greece and Alsace (Nepos), in Dacia and Mœsia (Severus). A fourth is mentioned, who passed from Syria to Britain, but his name is lost.

Antoninus, in the fifth year of his reign—that is, in early 143 A.D.—returned to the attempt of making as complete a conquest of the North as possible. He sent as legate a man who had helped in repressing and punishing the appalling massacres perpetrated by the Jews in the East, and who had later held an administrative post in Southern France—Quintus Sollius Urbicus. But little was done. He seems to have campaigned in Galloway. He certainly built or

restored a turf wall for frontier on the isthmus from Clyde to Forth, whence that line is called to-day "the Antonine Wall," though the legate of Antoninus did but link up the forts of Agricola.

The turf wall from Clyde to Forth

He commanded the three legions which are henceforward the permanent garrison of Britain—the Second, at Caerleon; the Sixth, at York; and the Twentieth, at Chester—the soldiers of which last mainly built him his wall, though men from the others were used. He had also, of course, many auxiliaries and certain detachments of other regulars.

The next legate is Cn. Papirius Ælianus, advanced from Dacia, in office at the date 146; then (after a gap we cannot fill) Julius Verus, coming from the Rhine in 157, and leaving for Syria on or after 160. Italicus followed him at the opening of the reign of Marcus Aurelius. He governed for one year only, in 161-162, and passed to the government of Cappadocia and the reconquest of Armenia; but, brief as his term of office was, it gave rise to one forgotten incident interrupting the long order of the Antonines. The army of Britain, already a particular thing, offered to acclaim Italicus emperor at this, the moment of Marcus' accession. The episode is evidence at once of the military character of Roman government, of the new regional character of the armies, especially in England; also, from the failure of the suggestion and the immediate success of Marcus Aurelius, it is proof of the firmness and discipline of the adoptive system which had so strengthened the Empire since Nerva.

Italicus governing Britain in 161-162

The first attempt at a separate Emperor in this country

To this short governorship succeeded, in 162, a long one—that of Calpurnius Agricola, who ruled England for at least eight years. He was nominated in connection with some local disturbance, perhaps on the Clyde wall. For the rest of the reign we only know the names of two legates, not their dates, but they may well cover the ten years or less that intervened between the end of Calpurnius' term, about 170, and the death of the Emperor in 180. These two legates are

Succeeding legates

Ulpius Marcellus and C. Jun. Faustinus Postumianus, who may have previously governed in Spain.

This brief list of legates and briefer fragments of their actions is all we have on record of civil history during the nearly sixty years of Roman order between the departure of Hadrian from Britain and the death of Marcus Aurelius. But in ecclesiastical history there was one event which, whether from the character of the man or his wealth and importance, struck contemporaries so much—in Rome at least—that it is the earliest *certain* episode of our Christian history. One of these local governors—presumably of British descent, which the Roman system favoured (or possibly a chief from the hill-country outside direct jurisdiction)—wrote to the chief Bishop, the head of the Church, Eleutherius of Rome, asked for missionaries to be sent to him, and himself accepted the faith. The action, like all striking actions in history, produced a crop of legends, such as his founding the first church in Winchester, etc. Some of these may be false, but of the main fact there can be no reasonable doubt.[1]

Conversion of the British Chief Lucius, A.D. 167

Three years after the accession of Commodus—but we must not exaggerate, nor ascribe the new difficulties to his incompetence in the distant capital—came a change. There was a violent irruption of barbarians from the Scotch North, and the destruction of a Roman force and its general. Commodus sent Ulpius Marcellus—in 183-184—to reconquer the border; perhaps the same who, in Marcus' time, had

Great northern raid of A.D. 183

[1] There can be no *reasonable* doubt save as to the exact date. Bede gives 167. Eleutherius was not actually *Bishop* till 174, but he was in the Bishop of Rome's administration long before. Clearly all antiquity believed it, because the first "Liber Pontificalis" (drawn up from older documents in the early sixth century) relates it, because the venerable Bede insists on it, and above all, because popular tradition witnesses to it by a mass of legend. Of *unreasonable* doubt on this, as on all matters of sound Christian tradition, there has been plenty of the usual modern sort, the stupidest example is Harnack's suggestion that "Brittanio" was really "Brithio"—Syrian, a mere statement without a shred of real evidence to back it.

been legate in Britain. He restored order and left a tradition of severe discipline which—even if we had no further evidence—would be some indication of trouble in the army itself, perhaps an explanation of the barbarian irruption. But we have further evidence of that trouble. There was a violent mutiny against the next legate, Pertinax, in which that general was maltreated, and there was also some obscure and ill-related interference by a delegation of the British Army—or perhaps a draft on its way home—in the local military politics of Rome. Pertinax laid down the difficult business of military command in Britain at that moment. He was succeeded by one Albinus—and with him begins a new phase.

Troubles in the army of Britain

D. Clodius Ceionius Septimus Albinus was a man rich, generous, a good commander, who had seen service in Dacia and—at a critical moment when one man's ambition could make a grave change in the story of the Empire—Commodus sent him to Britain in 192.

Albinus, A.D. 192

Already the tyranny of the Emperor had thoroughly shaken the old balance and simplicity of the Antonine period and had threatened an upheaval. Albinus had already taken advantage of the Emperor's unpopularity to seek in his new command a special and personal position; already had Commodus, alarmed, nominated a successor to him in Britain, when, in that same year, Commodus was murdered. For the first time within living memory, for the first time since the changes had taken place in the Roman Army, that great organism began to gather in separate groups for a civil war. It was more than 120 years since such a portent had appeared. The full security of the world was at an end.

Murder of Commodus

First threat of civil war after 120 years of peace

The legions had, on principle, been strung out along the frontiers against the barbarians; for the internal peace of the Empire was so thorough, its social unity was so confirmed through all its vast extent, that the public forces were little needed elsewhere. Of the garrisons, those were

thickest where the nature of the occupation most demanded the watching of the borders: the Syrian border facing the Persian power, Britain, and the Alpine Mass of Pannonia north-east of Italy. Each commander in these regions had a large body at his disposal. Septimius Severus, African by birth and accent, a man of fifty, a soldier all his life, commanded in Pannonia the greatest force; Niger in the East had three legions, so had Albinus in Britain. On the news of Commodus' death each general was acclaimed Commander-in-Chief—Emperor—by his own troops. Septimius Severus was nearest Rome.

Septimius Severus chief candidate for Empire

Pertinax, Didius

There, in the capital, the Senate had named Pertinax Emperor. The soldiers murdered him and put up the Imperial title for sale: a lucrative jest. Didius had the folly to buy. But Septimius Severus marched on Rome and killed the absurd pretender. That general next did a significant thing destined to bear fruit: he *divided the chief command*. At heart he was aiming at single rule, but he had not the power to defeat his rivals combined: he must separate them to succeed. The eastern troops were the less formidable: Septimius before marching against Niger sent word to Albinus (in June, 193) naming him *Cæsar*, as though to associate him in Empire and name him heir, for already the title "Cæsar" was thus used to distinguish not a full emperor—an "Augustus"—but his next in power and succession.

Septimius Severus offers Albinus a local Imperial power in England with the title of Cæsar, 193

Albinus accepted the offer and remained in Britain. For the first time since Rome had begun to dominate the world her army had appeared as a diverse body with local characters; for the first time since the Commander-in-Chief of the Army had become head of the State, that office was divided: an enormous precedent. *For the first time since Britain had entered the Roman world the island province had become something of a separate realm.*

Not that men thought of England as a separate nation, or that Albinus thought of his power as anything less than

General, Imperial, Roman power. But that the special geographical position of this island with its now native garrison led inevitably to occasionally isolated British commands.

Capital importance of this precedent for England

It is a most important date in the history of England, this date A.D. 193, for it stands at the origin of a whole series each marked by the isolated action of the Roman commanders in England. It is the first date—and it comes only 150 years after the beginning of the conquest—in which the tendency to a separate English action in Europe appears.

SUCCESSION OF ROMAN EMPERORS

B. The Third Century

(A.D. 193-A.D. 284)

Bassianus (Syrian Priest).

Julia Domna = Septimius Severus. (A.D. 193-211.) — Julia Mœsa.

- Caracalla. A.D. 211-217.
- Julia Sœmias. — Heliogabalus. A.D. 217-222.
- Julia Mammæ. — Alexander Severus. A.D. 222-235. (End of the Line.)

This dynasty is not really that of *Septimius Severus*, but of a Syrian family into which he married. Its succession was due to a number of Syrian women who appointed their sons in turn to be emperors.

The Confusion Begins

The thirty-three years of confusion: ten emperors, of whom all but one die violent deaths, and of whom all but the last two average little over *two* years each. Many barbaric raids. The whole ending under such weakness of central government that the provinces separately take over their own defence and administration.

- Maximinus. A.D. 235-A.D. 238. An illiterate German. Assassinated.
- Gordianus I. A.D. 238. An aged Roman noble. Killed himself.
- Gordianus II. A.D. 238. His son. Killed.
- Gordianus III. A.D. 238-A.D. 244. Massacred in the East.
- Philip. A.D. 244-A.D. 248. An arab; a soldier of fortune. Put to death.
- Decius. A.D. 249-A.D. 251. Killed in battle.
- Gallus. A.D. 251-A.D. 253. Murdered.
- Æmilianus. A.D. 253. Murdered.
- Valerian. A.D. 253-A.D. 260. Died captive of the Persians.

↓ His son

- Gallienus. A.D. 260-A.D. 268.

In this reign the Imperial power is at its lowest, and the provinces defend and govern themselves. The "30 Tyrants."

The Restoration of Order Begins

- Claudius Gothicus. A.D. 268-A.D. 270. Best officer of Gallienus; named by him to succeed.
- Aurelian. A.D 270-A.D. 275. Called "Restorer of the Empire;" an interregnum of eight months.
- Tacitus, an aged Roman noble; reigned only six months. A.D. 276.
- Probus. A.D. 276-A.D. 282. A private soldier raised by Aurelian.
- Carus. A.D. 282-A.D. 283. Prætorian Præfect of Probus.

↓

- Carinus (with his brother *Numerian*—sons of Carus). A.D. 283-A.D. 284.
- DIOCLETIAN. Acclaimed A.D. 284.

(B.) The Third Century: The Change

(A.D. 193–A.D. 286—93 Years)

Septimius Severus, the African, had established this great precedent of a co-ruler and of a separate British realm as a temporary expedient. Once rid of Niger in the East, he proposed to turn on Albinus and make himself sole head of the armies and of the world: the weakness of hereditary succession had returned. He never really meant to make Albinus (though he called him the Cæsar) his heir. He was thinking of his own sons.

Attempt and failure of Albinus

Albinus knew the danger, dropped the title of Cæsar, took that of Augustus (that is, full Emperor), and crossed the Channel into France, rallying many of the forces there to his side, and bringing over with him all that was mobilizable (and free from garrison duty) of the three British legions and their auxiliaries. The lieutenants of Severus marched to meet him, without success, till Severus himself arrived: the issue was joined before Lyons, and in a severe action timely reinforcements gave him victory. The flying British and Gallic Army was driven into the streets of the city, Albinus taken alive and executed. It was the 19th of February, 197; the separate rule of this first British monarch had lasted three years.

His death (A.D. 197)

Severus therefore divides the British command

Severus at once ordered the division of that dangerous British command. He established two military provinces in the island, *Britannia superior* and *inferior*. We do not know their boundaries, but on the analogy of the rest of the Empire we may take the Britannia *superior* to have been the northern part, furthest from Rome, and the Britannia

inferior the southern, with the dividing line running, presumably, south of York, and most probably marked by the Trent. He would seem to have given the North one legion (the Sixth) and *all* the auxiliaries—a sufficient counterweight to the two legions (Second and Twentieth) of the South. As one of the governors and military commanders—presumably in the North—Severus sent at once Virius Lugius, probably the same general who had tried to delay Albinus before Lyons. The departure of the British legions had led to a bad raid from Scotland, over the border between the Clyde and Forth. Now yet another precedent arose. Lugius compromised with the barbarians. He arranged peace upon terms of a large payment. It was but an incident, for the campaign was resumed ; but it was significant.

Second bad raid from Scotland

It is bought off; first precedent of this kind

Two obscure names, one imperfect inscription, are all we know of the legates who followed up to 205 (Adventus, Vettonianus, and perhaps Rufus) ; but from 205-208 the chief command, that of the North, is in the hands of Senecio. He fought hard and successfully against the border tribes, but the war was severe, and he summoned Severus himself. That old soldier—he was over sixty—came at once, crippled though he was by gout, and doing half his work from a litter. He brought with him those two worthless sons of his, Geta and Antoninus (who was nicknamed "Caracalla," from his cloak), for whom he designed the succession, though they still plotted against him.

Legates in Britain after 197

Senecio

Septimius Severus determines to end the Scotch raids

A.D. 208 comes to England in person with a very large army

Severus came rapidly north through Gaul in 208, got up at once to the seat of war in Scotland with much the largest army yet gathered for a British campaign. The story of its wastage may be exaggerated, but it is possible that he had, counting his auxiliaries, 100,000, and certainly more than 50,000 men of a mobile force, apart from his garrisons. With this he considered the plan of a complete occupation of the island. He went the next year right up north—it is claimed, to the furthest extremity, to Cape Wrath—certainly to the Moray Firth.

In that vast expedition of 209 Severus built roads and causeways and bridges, cut through woodlands, drained marshes. He did all that should mean a permanent occupation. But the task was too great in such a country. He lost prodigiously—perhaps half his effectives—and when he came back south to York (where he wintered), whatever garrisons he left behind him in Scotland, he had not fully succeeded.

Attempts a final conquest of the whole island (campaign of A.D. 209)

But fails

He was still in York by May, 210. If he campaigned in that season it was not as thoroughly as the year before; but he took the title of *Britannicus Maximus*, he held himself a conqueror, he commanded and overlooked the Restoration, or the Rebuilding, of the first STONE completion of the wall.[1] Even as he did so, one day, near Carlisle, omens disturbed him. That winter (210-211) the Highland tribes, who, at the end of the campaign of 210, had asked for peace and ceded territory, attacked his garrisons—probably his northernmost forts in Kincardine and Aberdeenshire. It was enough to show that his work was incomplete. With the spirit of all the conquerors who have attempted—and failed—to force the hill country from the south, he swore that he would exterminate the Scotch rather than abandon his plan of a completed Britain. All was ready for a renewed advance in March, when, his illness now intolerable, this great soldier died in York, on the 4th of May, 211, saying as he died, "I found the Republic in chaos. I leave it ordered—even in Britain!"

Restores Hadrian's wall

Prepares a second expedition

But dies at York, A.D. 211

His worthless son, Caracalla, patched up a peace, accepted assurances, abandoned the campaign, pursued throughout the Empire a six years' course of tyranny which shook society (murdering his brother with thousands of his brother's adherents), and died assassinated in 217.

His son Caracalla succeeds, A.D. 211-217.

[1] Whether Hadrian built the wall, in the main, with its towers and castles, for Severus to restore; or whether he only established a turf wall (like that of Antonine to the North), so that the main *Stone* wall is due to Severus, is still disputed. But the weight of evidence so far is with the latter view.

The long period of confusion in Roman government, 217-270

What follows, up to the accession of Aurelian in 270, looks, if we only follow the fortunes of rulers, like a welter of the Roman world. It is a whole lifetime. And during its fifty-three years you have, first, the domination of the detestable Asiatic women into whose family Severus had married; then—on the murder of their last nominee and relative, Alexander, in 237—a chaos of civil war, which is only gradually appeased, and ends with Aurelian's "Restoration of the Commonwealth."

But this impression of mere chaos, gathered from the story of those who governed, is imperfect and false. The Roman Empire between Severus and Aurelian subsisted, functioned, developed. It suffered grievously from the lack of continuity in its rulers; raids over its frontiers wounded its outlying parts; plague was common; the Arts sharply declined. But the vast body lived on with a vigorous life, and the real note of our civilization in the third century was not decay but *change*. The third century—the lifetime of men born in 200-220—saw a general transformation of our civilization; a turn-over which explains all that followed.

It is a point of capital importance and should be emphasized in every general history: it explains the future of our race: *the third century of the Christian era* (A.D. 200-300), *especially its central part, was the point of flexion in the curve of antiquity*. The third century was the time into which the high civilization of pagan antiquity poured, and out of which it came out in a different form and prepared for the religious debate which recast the world. The third century was the time in which antiquity began to dissolve for a resetting. Without understanding that revolution we cannot understand the story of England.

The Change in Civilization

These were the main political parts of the Great Change:—

(I) We have seen how the *Army*, the cement of all

that society, had already begun to change. That change was now consummated, and throughout the third century the army becomes (*a*) more local; (*b*) more barbaric in recruitment; (*c*) more sharply divided from the mass of the population. It formed only a tiny fraction of the male population, but it was the fraction which chose rulers, and on which depended all society, and especially local government. By the end of the third century it seemed normal to all that civilization from the Euphrates to the Scotch Highlands and from the Sahara and the Upper Nile to the Rhine and Danube to live a purely civilian life, disarmed, with all immediate power in the hands of military chiefs who were themselves increasingly of barbaric stock, who commanded men more and more of barbaric recruitment (largely German), who remained for years together in local cantonments which grew to be towns, whose children passed on to military service, and whose time-expired men took up land on the borders.

(II) *The Law remained supreme.* Property as an institution is founded so firmly, and the courts (which are everywhere) support it in such detail, that no social disturbance from within or without affects it. For centuries onward the mighty landowners collect their revenues regularly even at great distances. The gradual accumulation of wealth into fewer hands is itself a proof of the fixity of law; and the legal system gets more and more firm and elaborate throughout the third, fourth, and fifth centuries. The law is the pivot, itself immovable, on which the great change swings.

(III) *The Empire began to extend its influence beyond the frontiers into the barbarian places, and so produced a belt of borderland:* the frontiers became more and more open to influence *on either side.* Not only does the Roman Empire suffer from raids over the border into civilization, but, *much more,* does a wider and wider belt on the *other* side of the border, among the barbarians, receive Roman words and ideas and instruments and agriculture and ships.

This movement—the inevitable result of so long-lived and stable a civilization—is of capital importance. A neglect of it warps all history. The Roman language, customs, and commerce extended, with varying influence, far beyond the official frontiers, where these looked on any considerable population, especially of the German barbarians. By the time of Julian the Apostate (360), the valley of the Main, Thuringia, was building houses after the Roman fashion: clumsily, no doubt, but still real houses: permanent buildings such as none of the earlier savages could have built of their own traditions. The Imperial merchant system touched the Baltic and Southern Sweden; a Roman road is driven beyond the lower Rhine, right into barbaric North Germany. It can still be traced. All the belt of Teutonic tribes from the Elbe to the north of the Danube grow more and more familiar with civilization. The people on the coasts of Holland and at the mouths of the Weser and the Elbe, Saxons not directly governed from Rome, begin to copy the Roman art of shipbuilding, and make clumsy imitations of the Roman galleys, with which they begin to take to sea—often as pirates. German local jargons get filled with Roman words. As we shall see later, the dialects called "Teutonic" or "German" are inextricably tangled with a mass of Roman words.[1] Barbarians serve in the armies and go back home beyond the frontier, full of Roman experience. Conversely, there is a steady filtering of barbarians into the Empire. They are brought in as slaves in great numbers; as soldiers. They settle as veterans. In many places exactly similar people, of one blood and closely intermingled, live astraddle of the frontier, e.g. the people along the Middle Rhine (then, as now, Germanic), are half in the Empire, half out. There is a sort of "fading off" of the Empire at the edges in social practice if not in legal

[1] I have continually alluded, and shall continually allude, in this book to that essential point in European history which has been so much neglected. The German tongues are in half their origins debased imperial speech.

theory. That is what makes it futile to discuss when or whether the part of Britain between the two walls—the lowlands of Scotland and the Border—was "abandoned." It was always Roman, yet never as fully occupied as the south. The existence of this vague belt here, and on the lower Rhine and on the Danube, explains the auxiliary frontier guards of later times, such as the Franks. It also explains the way in which, when the strict central rule broke down, the half of this belt *within* the borders suffered considerable loss of organization. Thus it lost in many places (temporarily) its newly planted Christian Bishoprics and went Pagan again, as in eastern Britain, part of the Rhineland, and the Upper Danube. All these had to be remissionized and reconverted later on.

In general we shall have a false idea of Europe from, say, A.D. 250 onwards if we think of it as a sharply divided area, part highly civilized, part savage, with a clean-cut frontier in between. It was, on the contrary, one thing: coarsened gradually and slightly by the infiltration of barbaric blood, much more by the now increasing fatigue of an ancient civilization, but steeped everywhere, even to far beyond its frontiers, in the ideas and language and social habits of the Empire, which moulded all the lands over the border and only gradually faded as one proceeded northward and eastward into the denser darkness.

So that it is impossible to say of anything, for centuries, that it is German or Slav or Moorish. All the ideas, the instruments, the hierarchy of authority and leadership in society, the fixity of divisions, their governorship, the order of war, construction, tradition in word and thing—were Roman. And to-day all Europe is but Rome extended and transformed.

(IV) *This Roman education of the border-barbarian makes him a more frequent raider.* He "knows his way about" in fully Roman land, and he learns and profits by the arts of civilization. He is employed in the crews of Roman ships

in the channel and North Sea, and settles often in farms and little colonies on the coasts. Hence the presence of Roman civilization in the low countries, Holland, and all the Netherlands, affects all that flat waste right up to Denmark. The ships they build, on the Roman model, make them familiar with Roman harbours in the Channel and with the main centres of wealth : hence the Saxon and Frisian pirates, the former from the Bight of Denmark and the mouths of the Elbe and Weser, the latter their neighbours just down the coast and astraddle of the Roman border—all one body of people, some within the border some just without. We already hear of them pestering Britain as early as 259—or before. As with the Saxon pirates, so with the other bordering groups which receive the influence of civilization : the Franks of the Lower Rhine and all the people near that river, the Goths near (and, later, on) the Danube. The Arabs and others of the eastern border, the Scotch Highlanders (soon to be called " Picts "). Even the Irish, though separated by the sea, became familiar with Roman harbours in Britain, improve their shipping, and raid the land opposed to them.

(V) *The Arts within the Empire decline.* It is impossible to fix a cause. In some districts depopulation and recurrent disease ; a grave crisis in currency and rapid change in prices—*first* rising for generations with the debasing of the currency (a first result of metals falling short) ; *then*, centuries later, falling with the rarity of gold and silver—the admixture in governing families and offices of barbaric blood ; the vast extent of the field of government beginning to tell on the central administration at Rome ; fatigue ; the reaction on society of the continual struggle for the headship of the State, the Imperial office—it was all this combined. And the external manifestation of it was a sharp decline in the Arts. Historical record drops its continuity ; sculpture gets much rougher and worse ; architecture, while becoming grand and huge, loses proportion and fineness ; in literature

men look to the past only, and though probably there was a great extension of the numbers who could read and write (as there is to-day), for all the *externals* of civilization were expanding downwards, the things they wrote and read were (as they are to-day) on a lower plane. Although the amount of matter written enormously expands, yet the style becomes poorer and more conventional—a dictated rhetoric.

The Religion of the Third Century

Such were the main political marks of the great change in the third century; but, much more important, because underlying them all, was the change in *Religion*. A religious interest is what now fills the Roman world, and he who would properly realize what our society was during the great change before A.D. 300 and on into the Dark Ages—say up to A.D. 500 and later—must not give the first place to wars and raids, to the gradual decline of central power, the rise of local, Gothic, Slavonic, and other generals, their quarrels and territories, Gallic, Spanish, Italian, African, or to the words "Frank" and "Vandal;" he must rather consider a whole world intensely preoccupied with the nature and fate of man, the revelation and symbols of the Godhead. To leave that interest aside, or even to give it a second place, is like neglecting, in our day, the great economic interest which now dominates Europe. It is like emphasizing frontiers or parliaments and neglecting the increasing quarrel between Capitalist and Proletarian, and the struggle for markets and raw material in the twentieth century.

All is in the mind, and the mind of men during that recasting of the ancient world was obsessed by, dominated by, the Unseen Things. Mystery surrounded it, and glamour, and its appetite was for some final solution, some answer to the spiritual questions which had arisen to torture it with doubtful longings. It sought such an answer in

many issues, by many rites and congregations and mysteries: but in the midst of all, *one* institution alone had certitude, was fully confident, was highly organized, was pressing forward with life and definition through a swirling mist of opinions. In that one institution only was a fixed answer to be found. That one institution alone met the questioning, and, while it challenged and disturbed, yet imposed itself.

Thus it was that—especially in its later phase—the third century prepared the way for the Catholic Church to convert the world. The confusion of rites in the Roman Empire, its weariness with mere philosophy, its scepticism, its seeking vaguely for, but with increasing desire, One God—all these made a soil in which could grow with rapidity and strength that unique thing, the *Catholic Church*. The third century made of the Catholic Church, in numbers, from a small thing, great; the fourth made it official and the mistress of the Empire; by the fifth it absorbed all the thought of the world, and from thence onward it is identical with our civilization, which it saved and recreated.

We have seen how the Catholic Church was launched under Tiberius, in or about the year A.D. 29, at Jerusalem, by a group at first of eleven, immediately after of twelve, men, strictly organized through a common mission, and advancing certain highly definite *doctrines* which were the soul of the new institution. Let us recapitulate them. A Man, Jesus, whom they had known and followed, of Galilee (a half-Jewish district), as were they, had been put to death by the Jews at Jerusalem on the charge of blasphemy: that He had claimed the Godhead. These men said that this Jesus had revealed Himself to be God, had committed to them certain moral rules and doctrines for the governing and explanation of human life, had worked many wonders (in this they were supported by a host of witnesses), had risen from the Dead on the third day after His execution as a criminal, had ascended into Heaven before their eyes after founding this institution which they were pledged to extend,

and giving it for a head one of their own number, Cephas, or Peter. Entry to this institution was by baptism, that is, a rite of spiritual ablution with water in the name of a Triune God—Father, Son, and Spirit—of whom was this same Jesus, the Son of the Father. Their great rite was a Sacramental mystery : the changing of bread and wine into the body and blood of this God-Man, Jesus, by words of consecration, which they, the twelve, could pronounce with effect—a power they could pass on to others by a certain sacred rite, the Imposition of Hands, and so preserve for ever. They had separated and preached the new doctrine, aided by a powerful colleague, Saul or Paul, co-opted by them after his conversion through a vision.

We have seen how they and their disciples established throughout the Roman world, in city after city, communities upon the model of the original at Jerusalem, each governed by its local head, an *Episcopos* (of which we have made the word " Bishop "), who was one of the original founders, or nominated by them. Each community or " Church " had its Priests under the *Episcopos*, like him consecrating bread and wine for sacrifice and communion in the Mystery, each had its organization and laity. Each was called by the Greek term " Ecclesia," that is, " Society." [1] All in combination, as we have also seen, were called *the* " Ecclesia," the Church as a whole, the equivalent of which may have been in some popular Greek form " kyriakon "—of which we have made " Church." [2]

[1] But " Society " with the idea of initiation, ritual, and discipline ; and something of seclusion. Secret societies also were called by that name " Ecclesia ; " and though the Church was never a mere secret society—that is, never from its very origin depended on secrecy as a *principle ;* yet its mysteries were only for the baptized, and its members formed a close body throughout the Roman world, protecting itself and its members, where necessary, by seclusion.

[2] Ecclesia (*ἐκκλησία*) has given us a whole group of modern words : French Eglise, Welsh Eglwys, Basque Eglws, Italian Chiesa. From another word which *may* have been "*κυριακόν*" (" the Lord's building "), or may have been "*circulus*" signifying " the association," there came across the Danube to the Slavs and Germans another group of words—the Slav " Tserkov,"

This institution was unique. The antagonism between it and the world in which it lived, and of which it was a part, has been mentioned in general terms. But by this time—the middle of the third century—it had developed into a great power, which we must more carefully examine. This essentially Greek and Roman thing stood apart then from the Greek and Roman mass of the Empire of 220-270, separately marked in a number of ways : five in chief.

(I) Alone, of all the associations of that old world (philosophies, local worship of such and such gods, Imperial worship—as of Rome and the Emperor, fashionable rituals and mysteries, as of Isis and [later] Mithras)—it had a *creed*. The members of this strict society had to conform to a number of set doctrines which defined a full faith—the essential of their bond. Unless one accepted its formularies (called a "confessio" in Latin, a "*συμβολή*" in Greek) one could not be baptized.[1] Amid opinions, habits of mind, conclusions, rituals, and practices the Catholic Religion was a *Faith*. You could not belong to it unless you admitted its set doctrines. If you denied or doubted one of these you were not of the Church. Nothing else had that quality of certitude in the third century, nor has anything else to-day.

(II) Alone of all third century religions it was *historical* in its tenets and dealt with what it claimed to be realities. Isis was a goddess but a myth, to be interpreted, if necessary, as a symbol ; Mithras the same. A Stoic held one view of the nature of things and leant to Pantheism, an Epicurean another and leant to Materialism. All those who clung,

the German "kirche," the Scotch "kirk," our "Church," etc. In general, the "ecclesia" group of words all came round by the west and the "kyriakon," or whatever it was, by the centre and east.

[1] Thus what we call "The Apostles' Creed" was the baptismal formula used at Rome certainly within a lifetime of the Apostles. It is to be noted that these creeds were not a summary of doctrine, but a refutation of errors. The summary of doctrine was taught before baptism, as it is to converts to-day, but the creed was a sort of counter-affirmation against heresy.

more and more loosely, to local and city gods, clung to mere habits and traditions. But they of the Church worshipped a Person who had lived—lived recently and was known historically. "A dead *man*," as their opponents jeered. Their prayers were offered to an Unseen Almighty God ; but of Him also, and in Him, and one with Him, was this known, historical *man*. They had a pantheon, as it were, of saints, but the saints they revered were known men and women who had lived ; the Holy Apostles, the Martyrs, the Mother of the Lord ; an increasing host of real people, added to in each generation (as it is still added to now). Nothing was "esoteric," different in private from public statement, or *merely* symbolic ; all tenets were known to every full member, from the mystery of the Bread and Wine to the sacramental authority of the Bishop, from the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ to the claims of apostolic foundation and succession. This was a mark utterly dividing the Church from all around it : the gulf between mood and Faith ; between opinion and affirmation.

(III) It had a *complete system*. It taught a definite scheme explaining man's nature, his immortality, his resurrection, his alternative destiny for ever ; his opportunity of salvation or failure. This system grew stronger and stronger, more and more clearly defined, and covering a wider and wider field as time went on. Already by A.D. 150 it had a body of theological philosophy. The next generation (180-250), the day of Tertullian and Origen, had a vastly increased and consistent *corpus* of such developed doctrine. This scheme included a strict law of right and wrong. The members of the Church were not exhorted, as were those of the coteries around, to a vague purity or holiness or resignation or indifference, but to following set rules of conduct. Cases were decided : a legal habit of decision accompanied everywhere the discipline of the whole body. And this discipline was based on a strong organized Government, with regular officers in each community. A system of

intercommunication and meeting of authorities, of document and precedent, centres in a growing hierarchy the summit of which, at Rome, had a position not less but more defined with every occasion for appeal or command. No other independent body of the Empire was of this highly organized character save the Catholic Church alone. Hence the real grievance of the Empire against the Church. It was a dominion of itself, claiming an autonomy, which, to regular authority, seemed a rebellion.

(IV) It was a *Personality*. The Church in all its communities, all over the Roman world—and some, by this time, in the barbaric world beyond the frontiers—was one person: not a congeries but a unity. Hence, from its very origin, the function of excretion which has marked it. Not only did it oppose what was without, it expelled whatever within itself was inimical to its life and contrary to its principle of being. Since that principle was a creed and an ethical system, it practised, from its origin, the research and condemnation of whatever *within* its boundaries arose of conceptions or statements incompatible with its principles. To these the characteristic name of "choosings," i.e. "opinions" or "private judgments," attached; "*αἵρεσις*" a choice, gives "heresy." From the very first generation of this strict society the seeking out and expulsion of sectaries and their private doctrines was a fundamental activity necessary to the very being of such a religion.

(V) On account of all these preceding four marks of individual life the Church was in *Opposition*. It was indeed twin sister to the Empire; it was steeped in the Græco-Roman civilization, arose in it, continues in it to this day. It was a Roman civilized thing; and so far from an opposition between it and the tradition of Roman *civilization* (by which Europe still lives), there was and is an identity between them. But, so long as the Church is in subjection, it cannot but be in opposition to all around it that is not itself. Its exact definition of right and wrong shocked and was shocked

by those outside it. Its separate government seemed incompatible with the general civil government of the Empire. Its peculiar worship forbade its members what were, to all the rest of the world, regular and common functions of public ritual, such as sacrifice or offering incense at a pagan altar. But, above all, its intense individuality was challenged. The Catholic Church, then as now, sets men for it or against it, with a violent attachment or repulsion. Hence the Persecutions. The law of the Empire, in general, proscribed the Church, public opinion opposed it, and intermittent local violence. The provincial authorities would yield in one place and another, at various times, to outbursts of local feeling. The central government itself acted at intervals upon a general policy for its suppression, and initiated criminal prosecutions of momentary intensity. Such had been the action of Nero's government in 64, of Domitian's in 95, of Trajan's in 107, of Hadrian's in 125, of Marcus Aurelius in 165, and, at the opening of the century, of Septimius Severus in 202. But the intervening lulls were long, the policy neither continuous nor certain. The Church continually grew. Its members were but a fraction of the people at the opening of the third century (though its communities were everywhere) : even by its close, by the year 300, they formed but a minority of the whole population—in the West especially. But its homogeneity and internal discipline made up for its lesser numbers, and by the end of this time, by the opening of the fourth century, it had become much the strongest *single* force in all that society.

Such was the Catholic Church in the Roman Empire when that great Universal State was in the midst of its transformation—during the third century—during the boiling and recrystallizing of those fifty odd years between Septimius Severus and Aurelian. Grasp its character *then*, and all our history becomes comprehensible. Miss it, and all loses its meaning.

The History Resumed

State of Britain in the third century

Of Britain, the remotest province, we have, from the remaining fragmentary records of the third century, after Severus, an insufficient account. The Church was certainly already long planted here, and perhaps had passed the border into the extreme north ; but the communities must have been small. The society around was that of the western Empire in general, with the same town life, the same agricultural system of large estates tilled by slaves, the same network of great roads acting as arteries for the whole, and carrying the postal system of the Empire and its soldiers. The same universal system of law and property, upheld by courts everywhere and a body of magistrates and jurists. But no continuous record of political life in the island remains to us. It was, we may presume, even and uneventful for the first fifty or sixty years, until that memorable decade—259-268—when we first hear of the North Sea pirates. We have an incomplete list of its not-memorable governors, nineteen only for the now double province of Britain, to cover ninety-three years. But of these, six are names doubtful or incomplete, and of none can we certainly give the years of accession or departure, though we know for each certain dates of their presence in this island. Some may have been contemporary legates of the northern and southern provinces. Their names and fragments will be found in the table at the end of this division (p. 130).

The Asiatic family of Severus' wife, its women at least, appointed successively their sons to the Empire. The last of the clan, Alexander Severus, fell in 237. After the civil wars that followed on the Continent, Valerian rose for a moment to sole command of the Roman armies. He appointed (in 255) his son Gallienus to govern the West, but the only mention of Britain remaining to us at this time is a call for men to take guard on the Rhine. They were drawn from the Twentieth Legion at Chester, and its

auxiliaries, some time between 255 and 257, and helped to garrison Mayence.

Postumus, governing the Gauls and acclaimed a local Emperor in the general confusion, held all the West in 259 as a separate division of his own : Spain, France, and England. His power, which endured some ten years, is equally a blank so far as any detailed remaining record is concerned ; but his brief reign is a moment of great importance in English history, because at this time—between 259 and 268—the first allusion to the North Sea pirates appears. *It was now, just as the second half of the third century opens, that the men bordering on and astraddle of the Roman borders, on the Frisian and Dutch shores, having learnt to copy the Roman ships, and having served on them, had sufficiently familiarized themselves with Roman land, and now first took to raids upon the coasts of the Channel and the North Sea.*

Postumus local Emperor

First appearance of the North Sea pirates, 259-68

When Postumus associated Victorinus with himself in the management of the West, the latter had special care of Northern France and England (to judge by coinage, our only remaining evidence), and the island after him obeyed the Gaulish government of Tetricus, without any incident of which record remains.

. . . . . .

Were this book a history of Europe in the generation between the dynasty of Septimius (the sons of the Asiatic women) and the accession of Claudius II., this page would be given to a criticism of the common tale that Roman society in those thirty-three years (235-268) fell into ruins. It did nothing of the kind. The central government grew weak through the quarrels of generals. The frontiers were raided. There was *one* bad rush of barbarians across the Balkans and down into Greece, with great destruction. But the fabric of our ancient and powerful culture stood secure : the worst danger—that from Persia—was warded off by a local governor. The unity of control was soon recovered ; the unity of social habit and law was never lost for a moment.

What this passage of civil war and perpetually disputed succession did show, was the way in which, if the central government failed, Roman society insisted on and obtained strong local government through the local power of generals commanding in the provinces. It is that Roman insistence upon the maintenance of society by a strong government—central, if possible, if not central then local, but at any rate powerful and direct and vested in one man—which explains the recurrent local monarchy in Britain. It explains also how—200 years later and more—the disappearance of central rule exercised from Rome was permanently succeeded by local military government throughout the West, under the generals of auxiliary troops, such as Odoacer and Theodoric, Clovis, Syagrius, and the rest, and the kinglets who divided Britain.

AURELIAN, A.D. 270, again brings the Roman armies under one sole government after a lifetime of division

All this welter of warring local claims and local commands and emperors ends with the year 270. AURELIAN was acclaimed Emperor by his troops on the death of Claudius II. His vigorous campaigns brought all the Roman forces back to one command in three years. It was not "the Restoration of the Empire." But it was a great date in the general story of Rome; a proof of the Empire's indestructibility: the recovery of central power by a private soldier, risen to generalship from an obscure Dacian, perhaps barbaric, stock, and setting things thoroughly in order after a generation of breakdown. But the history of whatever was done in Britain, though it must have been much, has perished.

When record reappears it is with another of those attempts at a separate British monarchy. Under Probus (who reigned as sole Emperor from 276 to the mutiny of 282), a short episode, the prelude to successive independencies, marked the history of the island. About 280 one Bonosus, a Briton with a Gaulish mother, attempted—and failed—to usurp the West, as did Proculus at Cologne just later. Much at the same time, an unnamed Governor of Britain rebelled and was killed. More important to the history of England

is the transport to Britain—where, we do not know—of great masses of German-speaking prisoners in 278, Burgundians and Vandals (if, indeed, the latter spoke a German and not a Slav dialect—at any rate, they were mixed in with Germans). If these men were settled in the East it helps, with much else, to explain the future establishment of the mixed German and Latin dialects of the east coast.

More important still, just after Probus, Carinus leaves record of combating Frankish and Saxon pirates in 282-283. The raids may have been continual since 259, but we have this definite mention of them now. To meet them the colleague of the great Diocletian—whose profound effect on Europe we shall later follow—named one *Carausius* to a special command, based on Boulogne, for the clearing of the narrow seas. The appointment was made some time between 284 and 286, and in the latter year this same Carausius began that singular adventure which opens a new page in our history.

SUCCESSION OF ROMAN EMPERORS

FOURTH CENTURY

A.D. 284-A.D. 395 (A.D. 408-A.D. 423)

The Two Augusti

DIOCLETIAN. 284-305. MAXIMIAN. 286-305.
Both resign, 305.

MAXENTIUS. 312.

St. Helena = CONSTANTIUS CHLORUS. 305-306. GALERIUS. 305-311.

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT. Acclaimed 306. Recognized Emperor by his colleagues in 307. Six emperors reign in various districts, till in 315 only CONSTANTINE and LICINIUS remain. LICINIUS is defeated by Constantine in 324 and dies.

Constantine Chlorus.

Julius Constantius. CONSTANTINE THE GREAT = Sole Emperor. 324-337.

Co-Emperors.

JULIAN THE APOSTATE. 361-363. (End of the Line.)

CONSTANTINE II. 335-340.

CONSTANTIUS. 335-361.

CONSTANS. 335-350.

Sole Emperor 350-361.

JOVIAN. 363-364.

VALENTINIAN I. 364-375. Co-opts his brother VALENS. 364-378. (For the East.)

GRATIAN. 375-383. Nominates

VALENTINIAN II. 375-352. (End of the Line.)

THEODOSIUS. 379-395.

ARCADIUS. 395-408. (In the East.)

HONORIUS. 395-423. (In the West.)

(C.) The Fourth Century: The End of the Old Pagan World

(A.D. 286–A.D. 410—124 Years)

Carausius Monarch of Britain

M. Aurelius (Musæus) Valerius Carausius was born either in the North of Gaul or South Wales;[1] but, at any rate, he was of the Netherlands in upbringing.

He was thus native to all that borderland of low shore and broad rivers from the Lower Rhine, Scheldt, and Meuse to the mouths of the Weser and Elbe, where, on either side of the nominal Imperial limit, men had grown familiar with Roman shipbuilding, harbours, and wealth, and were breeding free-booter captains who landed on French and British coasts (sometimes for commerce, no doubt, after the fashion of free-booters, more often for loot), and who played the pirate. Among these pirates, the Franks and Saxons[2] especially—that is, those sailing from the Scheldt and Rhine mouths, the Weser and the Elbe mouths—were the most notorious. They were not numerous, but they could do great damage.

Carausius had shown capacity in the Imperial service, and when *Diocletian*, the Emperor whose great reforms we shall deal with in a moment, had chosen Maximian for a

[1] The word "Menapiæ" is the doubt. Menapia is St. David's. But there was a Menapian tribe in Gaul, inhabiting what to-day we call Zeeland in Holland. He was also certainly, during the early part of his active life, "Batavius," that is, *an inhabitant* of the low countries, and passed with his contemporaries for a lowlander, not a Welshman.

[2] The term "Frank" meant at that time a confederation of Belgian Germans astraddle of the Lower Rhine. The term "Saxon" meant at that time a little group of triblets principally on islands off the Elbe mouth, and perhaps a few on the mainland.

colleague in the West, the latter appointed Carausius to a naval command based upon Boulogne. His task was to clear the channel and North Sea of all those irregular ships, or, at least, to regulate their commerce and check looting. After his rebellion and fall, the worst things were said of him by official historians: as, that he had shared the loot of the pirates and winked at their raids. It is just as likely that his severity in taxing whatever looked like legitimate trade was his offence. At any rate, his power offended Maximian, who ordered him to be executed. Carausius saved himself. He crossed to Britain (keeping Boulogne as a bridge head on the mainland) and made a bid for a crown. The legions acclaimed him Emperor, and he established, once more, an independent English realm: another example of the peculiar position of this island in the scheme of Europe.

He seems to have ruled well and to have had solid backing. He struck from his mints at Colchester and London a very great number of sound silver coins when the rest of Europe was using the hopelessly depreciated currency inherited from the perpetual civil wars of the third century. His titles, at least, were those of a prosperous government. He vigorously organized a large fleet—principally manned by the independent sea-rovers, Franks and Saxons, whom he had dealt with—and added it to the regular Imperial squadron. It is to be presumed that he settled these crews in homes on the eastern and south-eastern coasts. These ship-crews made his position impregnable, and he further fortified it by adding to the large army of the island, the three legions of York, Chester, and Caerleon (Sixth, Twentieth, Second) and their auxiliaries, yet another great number of further auxiliaries—Franks—some of whom he may have impressed (after a victory on the Rhine, of which we have the bare record but no details), others engaged by contract as mercenaries—like the thousands of other Teuton mercenaries and farmers already settled in Eng-

land. He further garrisoned with other German-speaking troops the mouths of the Rhine and the Scheldt, adding them as further bastions to his bastion of Boulogne.

He is admitted Augustus by Maximian and Diocletian

In the late spring of 289, Maximian tried to dethrone him, and failed before the superior seamanship of Carausius' fleet. In the next year, 290, the Continental Emperors admitted him as their colleague by a regular treaty.

But the treaty was grudged. By 292 Diocletian and Maximian thought themselves strong enough to attempt once more the unison of the Empire; they deputed (March 1st, 293) to their new subordinate *Constantius Chlorus*, the Cæsar,[1] the task of reducing Britain. In that same spring of 293 Constantius suddenly attacked Boulogne, blocking the mouth of the harbour as well as besieging the land side. He took it, with the ships of Carausius in its port and all its garrison. He next seized the mouths of the Rhine and Scheldt, and began to build a new fleet. Carausius had at his side—probably named as his "Cæsar" and heir to his power—one Allectus. This man, after the first successes of Constantius, murdered his patron and assumed the succession in Britain that same year, 293. But he had short shrift. By the spring of 296 the main Imperial force was ready, and sailed: a large fleet and a great army. Half the fleet and transport under Constantius himself sailed from Boulogne; the other half, under his lieutenant, Asclepiodotus, from the mouth of the Seine: the first for Kent, the other for the Wight. It was thick weather, in which Constantius seems to have met no opposition in the Straits, while Asclepiodotus passed in fog unseen by Allectus' fleet off the Wight, and landed somewhere on the Hampshire coast. Allectus fell back to cover London, having with him only his Frankish auxiliaries and men from the ships. The

Carausius murdered by Allectus

[1] That is, second in command below the Emperors—the "Augusti" and their heir. We shall see below how Diocletian had re-arranged the Empire to be ruled by two Emperors, each called an "Augustus" and each having a subordinate and heir to succeed him, called a "Cæsar."

Who is defeated and killed by Constantius Chlorus, the emmissary and Cæsar of the Augusti

invaders met him somewhere between Southampton Water and London, and destroyed him and his force. A few ships of Constantius' fleet coming round to London, their soldiers cut up some of the Frankish fugitives in the streets of the city. Constantius himself had already been acclaimed in Kent, and the whole province was immediately recovered.

The recovery of Britain enabled Diocletian to complete his Imperial scheme, and the man and his work must now be described.

The great work of Diocletian

The disturbances of the third century had been stemmed by Claudius, and set right for good by his successor, Aurelian "the restorer"—the man who reaffirmed the vitality of the Empire by recovering its unity in 270-273. But the vital point, the arrangement of succession to the supreme command of that vast military body, the armed forces of the Empire, was not settled. Aurelian himself died assassinated in 275. The chief of his short-reigned successors in the nineteen years that followed, Probus, one of Aurelian's best generals, fell as he had done, assassinated in a mutiny. After a brief interval, on the assassination (by the chief of his own guard) of the last figure in this series, Carinus, the army in the East acclaimed Diocletian, in A.D. 284. From that moment things changed.

His origin and character

Diocletian, like most of the great soldiers of the time, was from the mountains east of the Adriatic. Like so many of them (including Aurelian), he was of low birth and owed everything to his talent for command; his parents had been slaves. But Diocletian was more than a soldier who could command men directly: he was also a man with genius for the *machinery* of government. His strong face was that of the greater Cæsars, and his mind was on their plan. He was approaching his fortieth year when he first took power. He held it twenty-one years, and in the interval he remodelled and put into its final order the whole Empire. His name will always be hateful for the worst of the persecutions of the Church; but he was here a victim rather than a culprit.

The Persecution was not his own policy. For the rest, it failed; while his civilian work endures to this day.

His work stamped on Europe to this day

For the divisions established by Diocletian still mark the map of Europe and the territorial divisions of the Church, while his scheme of titles and of court and local dignities keep their stamp to-day. His new framework of Empire preserved civilization through that critical fourth century, in which the Catholic Church took over our world and made possible its continuance through the Dark Ages.

Diocletian's three great achievements

The master aim of Diocletian was stability: the refounding of order. To achieve this he undertook three tasks:—

I. He organizes a hierarchy of military government

I. He erected a hierarchy of local governments. At the summit were the great "Præfectures," such as that of the Gauls, which took in all the West beyond Italy—Britain, Gaul, Spain—and had its capital at Treves. These "Præfectures" fell into "dioceses," of which that of the Gauls had three—Gaul, Britain, and Spain. While each "diocese" fell into "provinces," much smaller than the old, traditional divisions of that name. Thus, in Britain (at first one province, then, after Septimius Severus, two) he carved out four—Britannia Prima, Britannia Secunda, Flavia Cæsarensis, and Maxima Cæsarensis. With some probability (but without certitude) we may roughly regard these as corresponding to South England to the Thames, the Midlands (with the Welsh Marches and sparsely-populated, half-independent mountains), East Anglia, and the North beyond Trent.[1] His object in this hierarchy and subdivision was to establish smaller manageable areas as a unit, and at the same time, through a network of inferior and superior officials, to establish a strong civil discipline.

II. Of civil government

II. He separated civil from military power in each *Diocese*, and put a civilian at the head under the title of *Vicarius*, with much ritual and ceremonial attached to him, and with subordinate title, and etiquettes for his inferiors, the

[1] An added probability for this identification is the fourfold division of the Dark Ages: Wessex, Mercia, East Anglia, Northumbria.

heads of provinces: all those no longer responsible, as they had been, to a local military governor. He separated the military commands and made them responsible to the Præfect of the Cæsar, or Augustus, of the whole Præfecture. Thus in Britain he established a *Dux Britanniarum* in the North; a *Comes* of the Saxon shore [1] (the Channel and North Sea, from the Wight to the Wash); a *Comes Britanniarum* in the West; perhaps a Commander-in-Chief for the whole island.

III. And settles the succession

III. The worst difficulty of all, the question of succession, he settled thus. He took a colleague—a good and popular general, a ranker like himself, Maximian (whom we have just seen appointing Carausius), and left him the West, himself taking the East. These two were the *Augusti*, the Emperors (nominally equal), co-rulers forming one government (though Diocletian himself was always the real head). Later—in 292—he completed the system by adding to each *Augustus* a subordinate, a *Cæsar*, that is, a coadjutor and destined heir to the Empire. He thus hoped to return to that adoptive method of succession which had secured peace under the Antonines. He chose for his own Cæsar, Galerius, for that of Maximian (whose subordinate would have Gaul and Britain), a man of good birth and noble nature, a general of long experience, *Constantius Chlorus*, whom we have seen victoriously pitted against Carausius and Allectus in England.

Constantius Chlorus Cæsar over Gaul and Britain

Constantius Chlorus, on taking over the government of Britain and Gaul, first campaigned against the Highlanders in the North (304)—Picts as they were now called—then returned to Gaul.

[1] This phrase "Saxon Shore," which applied not only to the British but to the opposite continental coast, may mean "Shore to be protected from Saxon pirates," or "Shore settled by Saxon auxiliaries." The latter from the past and future of those coasts and from place names, is much the most probable. But it matters not which, for whatever boundary Rome defended was always defended also by its raiders in her pay, so France uses, and England, the tribes of North-West India, Moroccan chiefs in the Atlas. There was certainly a line of German settlements along the south-east coast of Britain.

In May, 305, Diocletian, true to his idea of adoptive succession as opposed to a *dynasty*, retired, and his colleague, Maximian, with him, the two Cæsars automatically succeeding, and Constantius Chlorus becoming *Augustus*, that is, full Emperor over the West, Galerius over the East, and the two combined forming the one government of the world. The new Emperor Chlorus, early in 306 (February or March), was preparing to sail again for Britain from Boulogne when he was unexpectedly joined by his son Constantine, then a man of thirty-two, whom Galerius (who did not want him declared Cæsar) had kept with him in the East as a sort of hostage, but who had got away on we know not what excuse and hurried to join his father. This same Constantine was destined soon after to change the history of the world.

becomes Emperor of the West

is joined by his son CONSTANTINE

Constantius, with his son, landed in England, campaigned in the earlier summer beyond the northern border, returned to York, when, immediately after, on July 25th, suddenly and unexpectedly, he died.

and dies at York, A.D. 306

Constantine remained. He was not a "Cæsar." He had no constitutional claim. The whole Diocletian scheme was specially designed to prevent an hereditary dynasty, and to return to the system of adoption and of selection by governing merit alone, after trial in office. Galerius, actually reigning, had designed one Severus to succeed. But the soldiers of Constantius' British command had a feeling of personal loyalty. Further, they knew themselves and their fellows to be the best fighting force in the Empire: a match for anything in Italy, and far superior to the Easterns (for each army was by this time more composed of native troops than ever). Further, there acted with the British Army a large body of German auxiliaries—Alemanni from beyond the Rhine, under their own King, Crocus, and this great subject lent Constantine his voice and power. Between them all Constantine was there and then at York acclaimed *Augustus*, full Emperor. He himself wrote to Galerius

Anomalous position of CONSTANTINE in England, summer of 306

He is acclaimed Augustus by the Army of England at York

suggesting the more modest position of *Cæsar*, and also suggested for himself a command beyond the Alps, that is, Gaul and Britain, to be governed by him, from Treves as a frontier capital. Galerius grudgingly agreed.

No British records left of his reign

Nothing has remained of the documents which might tell us what passed in Britain during the next thirty-seven years. The great Drama of Constantine, that revolution in the story of Europe, affected all the Empire, and England necessarily with the rest. But we have no details of its special effects on our side of the Channel.

None the less, we must know the bare outline of that story or we shall know nothing of English history, for it was under Constantine, proceeding from England and possibly [1] of British blood, that our general civilization was saved. If we live to-day, as we do, by the tradition of Rome, we owe the preservation of that culture to the united rule which Constantine established, and to the final victory of the Catholic Church, which he permitted and confirmed.

The legions and auxiliaries of England, then, saluted Constantine " Cæsar " here in England at York. It was as an heir to the Empire, nominated by the legions of Britain, and from Britain as an origin, that he launched out on that great adventure which ended in the making of a New and Christian World.

For Constantine was to be one of the great figures of time, partly through his own singular soul, partly through the circumstances of his advent to power.

Constantine's birth

He was the son of an early obscure love-match. Constantius, his father, in his very early career as a soldier, had married—perhaps surreptitiously and with imperfect rites—a woman older than himself, the daughter, most probably, of some obscure innkeeper of Drepanum in the country near the Bosphorus, beyond the sea of Marmora, though, as others

[1] But unlikely (see below). The interest of the story lies chiefly in its proof of the way in which Constantine and England were associated in the popular mind.

say, born in Britain.[1] When he rose to such high honour he was compelled to put her away for the daughter of Maximian, but he made her son—whom she had borne him at Nish, in the Balkans, during his campaigns—his chief care and the heir of his empire. She it was who, in extreme old age rediscovered the true Cross,[2]—St. Helena. Whether she was already Christian when this love-affair of early youth marked the mind of Constantius, or whether she were then only approaching the Faith, or later converted, we do not know.[3] But we do know that Constantius Chlorus was always favourable to the Church, surrounded himself at Court with Christians, and professed himself devoted to the One God.

St. Helena

For all that time, 293-306, was critical in the extreme. All the future was in the balance. The Catholic Church had advanced far in that lifetime between Septimius Severus and Diocletian. Its great buildings were already so conspicuous, its numbers so large, and its influence beyond its own body so great, the philosophies and rites opposed to it grown so confused and weak, that the challenge which it had always presented to the pagan world, even when it was but rising, now seemed that of an equal: the irritation it had

Turning-point in the history of the Catholic Church

[1] Contemporaries use of Constantine vague terms such as "Sprung from Britain," which may allude to British blood or (more likely) to his election in Britain. Two hundred years later we have allusions both to his mother's birth at Drepanum and to record of Constantine's honouring Drepanum with her name as her birthplace—but other places were also thus honoured. A strong legend persistent in England makes her out to be British.

[2] The tradition is uncontradicted, the remaining account detailed and clear, and the negative evidence against it quite insufficient. The Cross was certainly rediscovered at that time, and presumably by St. Helena, for her name is always connected with it and with her well-attested pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Indeed, the rejection of her claim is only part of that mania for attacking tradition which was one of the plagues of the nineteenth century, and from which we are only now beginning to recover.

[3] Eusebius, a contemporary, does *not* say (as he is loosely quoted) that she became Christian under the influence of Constantine (who, after all, was not himself baptized till the end of his life). What he does say is that she became devout under his influence, so that "she might have been (Christian) from her childhood."

caused as a small obscure body was now an insistent attack, and of that older pagan world and the Faith one or the other must now triumph. A battle, an issue, was inevitable.

The persecution of Diocletian

It came in the form of the last, and by far the most violent, persecution. Old Diocletian, who had stood neutral in the great debate and was originally no enemy of Christians, was persuaded by his newly adopted colleague, Galerius, to return for the last time to the old theme that the Roman order and civilization were incompatible with the Catholic Church, to make Paganism even now, at its close, the mark of the Imperial tradition, and to attack its rival. In his own supreme name (though at Galerius' urging) he opened the great and final general Persecution in 303. It increased in violence. It pulled down the churches, sought out all copies of the Catholic scriptures and Books of Ritual for destruction, and tortured and killed, first those prominent among the clergy, then, among all, whoever refused to abjure. The Church had already so large a hold on mere fashion that very great numbers were Christians of routine only or of social habits. From these there was a large apostasy; but a strong minority held out and were triumphant. When Diocletian resigned in 305 the battle was won; and though the policy of attempted destruction continued in the East and was again attempted—fitfully and locally—in the West, the tide now flowed with the Catholics.

It fails

Constantine already (in 305) on the Christian side

Constantine was a man of strong sacramental imagination. He was also devoted to, and influenced by, his mother, St. Helena, whom, immediately on his accession, he had sent for to Treves, his capital of the Gauls. His birth, the son of such a woman and of the devout Constantius, his own strong mind, fitted him for what next came, which was the famous vision of the Labarum.

After a long series of rivalries and civil wars between the occupants in, the claimants to, and the heirs of Empire, Constantine, governing the Gauls and Britain, found himself in 308 admitted *Augustus* by his eastern and Italian rivals;

but four years later Maxentius—Maximian's son—desiring supremacy in the West, proclaimed Constantine a usurper, and threw down his statues. A struggle for supremacy in the West was thus begun, and to understand its character the first thing we must do is to see how those few years affected Religion, for on the revolution in *Religion*, as we have seen, not on racial or political quarrels, the history of Europe now begins to turn.

He is declared a usurper

All the mind of that generation, pagan and Christian, and that largest fluctuating vague body which was ready for the Church, though not yet of it, was alive with the supernatural. Magic was not a jest or a memory, it was fiercely present. Some one God to worship—the Sun, as his most evident symbol, or Mithras, or the Sun as Mithras, or the Almighty Father and Creator whom most men now confessed and who was most evident in the affirmations of the Catholic Church—was a strong necessity for men. Omens and presages, the presence of and communion with unseen things, were a part of all action.

In such a world the supernatural worked with especial strength in Constantine, but the trend of it in him was towards the Church. Maxentius, based on Rome (where he practised the worst and most cruel, magical rites, sacrificing children to discover his fate), awaited in Italy, with great armies, the attack of Constantine. Constantine, marching south from Treves, had—probably in the plains of Alsace—a dream and a vision, the latter, as he affirmed, shared by his army. He saw in the sky a bright light in the form of a sign , and beneath it the legend, "In this conquer." He had it stamped upon his soldiers' shields. He made it his ensign. It was the *Labarum*. Already in some fashion he connected it with the Faith. The mysterious and novel pattern had in it the first two Greek letters, *Chi* and *Rho*, of the Holy Name—"X, P" (Ch. R.).

His vision of the Labarum

It suggested the Cross. He had come of a household

familiar with, and attracted to, such things. In the Cross he was already engrossed. He said its form protected men in battle. He worshipped it.

The army led by Constantine, like so many that had come, and were to come for centuries, out of Gaul into Italy, was far smaller than but far superior to its opponents. All felt by now that, in the main, although Constantine did not yet call himself a Christian at all, its triumph would stand for that of the Catholic Church. His advance recalls Napoleon. He defeated the first army of Maxentius near Turin, shut up a second in Verona, destroyed a third which marched to relieve that garrison, advanced on Rome, and there, a few miles north of the city, met Maxentius himself and his last great army. He surprised that army probably on the march, certainly stretched out in column, between Saxa Rubra and the *Milvian Bridge* (the bridge over the Tiber where the road from the north crosses it, only three miles from the Walls of Rome), and therefore gained a complete victory, wherein Maxentius himself was drowned (October, 312). Constantine was master of the West.

Constantine catches Maxentius in column of march and wins a complete victory at the Milvian Bridge

The next spring, that of 313, he met one of the pagan Augusti of the East at Milan, Licinius, the last survivor of Diocletian's scheme, and ruler of all from the Adriatic to the Persians. Between them they issued, as a compromise, that *Edict of Milan*, which marks the political origin of Christian Europe. It did not establish the Church : Licinius had been a persecutor and stood for all the old order. But Constantine had the stronger weapons in his hands, and his influence is clear. The Edict, under the form of universal toleration, specifically favours the Christian Church, protects it, threatens its enemies and relies for peace on the worship of the One God, whom it approaches, however, under the neutral title of " The Deity." The whole tradition of Europe rightly looks back to this act as Constantine's, and rightly treats it as the beginning of Catholic times.[1]

The Edict of Milan, 313

[1] We have no original text remaining of the Edict. But we have a right to speak of it as an historical fact. It is certain that Constantine and Licinius

Nine years later, Licinius (from whom he had already taken the Adriatic belt) having renewed his persecution of the Church, Constantine in 323 marched again with a smaller, but better, because Western, army against Licinius, defeated him at Adrianople, at Byzantium, and finally beyond the Bosphorus on the heights of Scutari, accepted his resignation, and then, on a charge of conspiracy with the barbarians, had him put to death. Constantine stood thus, in 324, the master of the whole world.

Constantine becomes sole Emperor

There was now no doubt of the political triumph of the Church. Though Constantine delayed his baptism—a custom of the time—he was now openly, in conversation and habit and government, a Christian. But those who regard this, his support of the Church, or any of his major acts as the mere calculation of a politician quite misunderstand this extraordinary man and the time in which he lived. It was under a master full of a personal intense imagination (or power of vision) filled with the supernatural, strange, sometimes cruel, exalted, that the world lay in that year 324. He was just turned fifty.

and is, in practice, Christian

Two acts of the first importance to human history marked this moment. The first was this: Constantine fixed his government in a new city of his own foundation, the extension of Byzantium, *Constantinople* (the town of Constantine). His doings are vividly characteristic. Again a vision impelled him. He obeyed a command of Heaven. He himself traced out, walking in solemn procession, the vast extent of the walls, and was sure that an invisible Divine guide went before him as leader. He planted the New Rome—such he wished it to be called—under the full influence of the Church: her prelates were his priests in the ceremony. The city was dedicated to Our Lady.

He founds Constantinople

met at Milan in early 313, and (probably about February) came to an agreement on a public policy of toleration. Further, Licinius published a document immediately after (June 13th, 313) at Nicomedia, which he sets forth as the arrangement come to at Milan. This text we have, and from it we know the provisions of the original. Finally, we have universal and uninterrupted tradition, the strongest evidence of all.

This transference of the seat of government to the East was of vast effect on history. It sapped the central power of Rome over the West. It prepared the slow rise of independent government in Italy, in France, in Spain, in Britain. It orientalized the highest or wealthiest part of the State, but left the occident more free to recover its traditions.

He summons the Council of Nicæa

Constantine's second act was the summoning of the Council of Nicæa.

Exactly coincident in time with the Triumph of the Church against external enemies came by far the greatest internal danger to her life.

The fundamental doctrine of the Faith is the Incarnation; that is, *not* man become godlike in the excellencies of Jesus Christ, *but* God become Man in Jesus Christ. Such a mystery had bred heresy in weak minds from the beginning, chiefly on the two extremes which would deny the mere Humanity or the full and conscious Godhead. There had been many such heresies. But now, after 300 years, a movement of far greater import than the older ones swept all the East. Arius, an Egyptian priest of the diocese of Alexandria, focussed in his teaching a feeling very widespread through the East, and increasing in scope and effect. The Incarnation was too deeply rooted in Christians for a mere sceptical *denial* to have effect on them. The Mystery was *interpreted*, and Arius' interpretation left the Son a created being. There was one God: Christ was not that God. He was of God, from God, in God—all you will. But not fully God: or God could not be One. This heresy of Arius was essentially the *rationalizing* of the Mystery, that is, the starving and degradation of spiritual vision by a reduction of it to common experience. If we seek for the sources of this heresy's strength—it covered a large body of the Eastern clergy and bishops—we find it in two sources: intellectual fatigue and the new universality of the Church.

The Arian heresy

A high mystery strains the finite mind; ten generations had given time for that strain to produce fatigue. The

sudden extension of the Church over great, half-indifferent, ill-digested popular masses added to the effect. The new public and political position of the clergy as a part of the governing classes, with their function of maintaining power over all and their new excess of temporal interest did the rest. Many of the clergy leant towards Arius.

To Constantine himself this sudden and universal quarrel was at first a mere irritant, something disturbing the unity and peace of the world. Being a matter of interpretation, he thought it a mere quarrel of words. During the remainder of his own life he failed to distinguish anything profound in the great discussion. And when, much later, he was baptized, it was at the hands of a bishop who had leant, at least, to the wrong side. But the immediate thing was to restore peace. He summoned to Nicæa, a town over the water from Byzantium (Constantinople), the Bishops of the Empire. They met in General Council to the number of 318, in the midst of a vast concourse of lesser clerics and officials, in May, 325. In June they affirmed that great general creed which was to form the basis of European life.[1] The full mystery of the Incarnation was defined beyond escape; the Faith was crystallized, as it were, and given edge and hardness to endure.

The Nicæan declaration of the creed

But Arianism survived, and, by an historical accident of great moment, affected the *auxiliary* troops of the Empire in a fashion the effect of which we shall later see. The generals of Teutonic and Slav, and even of Mongol, origin, and their troops in the Roman service, were nearly all Arian, because, at the moment of the Empire's conversion, Arianism had been fashionable, and barbarians always follow fashion.

The barbarian auxiliaries attracted by Arianism

Further, the barbarian in close contact with civilization is of the half-educated type, and the half-educated man (as we may see all around us to-day in popular manuals) rationalizes mystery. He has not the strength either for

[1] The Creed to-day called "Nicæan" is a somewhat later edition: but doctrinally, of course, the same.

scepticism or faith. He dreads to be thought unconventional, but at the same time he is sure he "knows all about it."

When we read later, therefore, of a Goth, a Vandal or Lombard soldier, we must see them as Arians out of communion with and inferior to the Catholic world all around.

These two great acts of Constantine's reign had upon Britain only a negative effect; but that negative effect was all important to her history. Britain lay at the extreme limits of the West; the removal of central government to Constantinople left her the most distant province of all from the seat of government, made her garrisoning ultimately more difficult, and the influence of all that affected the Imperial Court (especially its religious quarrels), less strong upon her than upon any other province. Therefore was England at last left—after 410—without a renewal of her garrisons; but therefore, also, did this island become a bulwark to orthodoxy for near a thousand years.

Effect on Britain of the removal of government to Constantinople

Constantine died in A.D. 337. He had left the Empire to—that is, made "Cæsars"—his three sons and two nephews: a singular folly in dynastic policy for one so often wise. While he yet lived they were each assigned their divisions as Christian heads of what was now, for all its tolerance, an officially Christian system. He meant them to act as Augusti—as one Imperial government divided between various local commands, after a fashion now generations old. In the tumult and massacres that followed, the three brothers alone were admitted Emperors by the army and the Roman Senate. Within three years the eldest, Constantine, was killed at twenty-four years of age in civil war by his brother Constans, to whom fell all the West.

The succession of Constantine

He had occasion to pass a brief moment in Britain during the earlier part of 343, to repel a raid from the North. The occasion was urgent, for he had to cross the Channel suddenly in the depth of winter with a small bodyguard. He had at his Court in France a powerful soldier, Magnentius,

Constans in Britain, 343

perhaps a Briton by birth, more probably a German. Magnentius in 350 usurped the West and killed Constans. Killed, 350

Constantius, the third remaining son of Constantine, made war on him and his associate, defeated them, and was sole Emperor from 353. The episode again brings Britain into the records of the time remaining to us, for Constantius laid hand on the chief supporters of his dead rival and sought them especially in this island. He sent over a Spaniard, Paul, as his agent of police, to seek out and arrest on all sides. That emissary's injustice and oppression were so extravagant that Martin, the Vicarius of Britain, head of the civil government of the diocese, opposed it and fell. A troop of British notables were carried over sea to the tortures of the Emperor, and the memory of that time may have furthered that tendency to separate action here, that effort at separate monarchy, which the sea had already produced and which was to continue to the end.

Is succeeded by his brother Constantius as sole Emperor, 353

His action in Britain

Two years later Constantius appointed to the West as Cæsar, in 355, his cousin Julian, the son of the great Constantine's half-brother : a young man of twenty-four, morose, nervous, scholarly, industrious, with his troops popular, but chiefly remarkable for his hidden hatred towards the new and increasing dominance of the Catholic Church. For more than five years Julian kept his own counsel, governing in Gaul, frequenting Paris. He worked well upon the frontiers, destroying a great band of marauders near Strasburg, organizing a corn supply from England, and settling an armed garrison of Salic Franks in Belgium to guard that border of the Empire. His work here was of permanent effect : for the Franks, so settled, became powerful auxiliary troops in the Roman Army, with a local government under their own chiefs. A century later, when the central government broke down, the general who commanded their garrison at Tournai was able to administrate his district almost independently, and his son Clovis rose to administrate with complete independence all Northern Gaul.

Julian, later the Apostate, is appointed Cæsar in the West, 355

In Britain the raids from the Scotch North continued over the Wall, and to them was added a new menace: Irish pirates, and raiders from the Irish settlers on the south-west coast of Scotland.

He sends Lupicinus to Britain, A.D. 360

Julian was in Paris. He did not cross the Channel, but sent over his cavalry general Lupicinus and a number of fresh troops—half of them German. Lupicinus crossed in the first days of 360 to Richborough—then the main Channel port—made his base of London, and after a short campaign returned.

But meanwhile the Emperor, his cousin, Constantius, had recalled Julian eastward. The Gallic troops detested the order, and acclaimed Julian Emperor. He marched against his cousin, but that enemy died before Julian had reached Constantinople, and Julian became in this year, 361, the sole monarch. He had but two years to live, for in the summer of 363 he was killed in a Persian war; but during that short interval he did all that was possible—so late—to revive paganism. He had some basis for such action. The mass of the upper class in Old Rome was still pagan, so were the bulk of literary men all over the Empire. But their paganism was now no more than a negative. Life had gone out of the gods. It has been asked whether, if Julian had lived, he would have succeeded. He would have failed; the tide was already running too strongly.

Julian Emperor, 361

Dies, 363

Valentinian Emperor in the West

The next Emperor (in the West), Valentinian, was the son of a soldier risen from nothing, a vigorous general who had commanded the troops in Britain.

Valentinian saw the beginnings of serious perils for Rome. In his very first year, 364, a general movement broke out among all the half-romanized border tribes. In Britain the Irish, the Picts (Scotch Highlanders), and a newly named tribe of Attacotti—Highlanders also—raided; and within three years these raids, to which were added frequent pirate swoops of Franks and Saxons on the Channel and North Sea coasts, brought the Emperor (in 367) to Amiens,

when things suddenly went worse. *The first breakdown appeared.* There took place in that year some sort of concerted movement, the Saxon pirates defeated the auxiliary forces defending the Channel coast (also probably Saxon), and their general, Fullofaudes—himself probably or certainly a barbarian—fell. At the same moment the Wall was crossed in the North, and the general there commanding, Nectaridus, fell also; the small garrisons of the northern forts deserted—the whole province of Britain lay open.

Peril of Britain in 364

Valentinian acted with energy. He at once sent over Severus, his general, then Jovinus—who sent back Proverbs to insist on large reinforcement. Things were desperate. In early 368 Valentinian despatched his best subordinate, Theodosius. Theodosius, with a large army, mainly German in recruitment, marched straight on London, which was already gravely threatened. He wintered in London, changed the commands (asking for Civilis as civil governor and Dulcitius as his military lieutenant), then in a vigorous campaign, with his young son (the future great Emperor Theodosius) beside him, he for the moment restored all things. He destroyed the raiders utterly by sea and land, cleared the island, and even recovered fully the Scotch Lowlands and border between the walls to which, after the Emperor's name, the title of "Valentia" was given. He returned in 370 triumphant, and the Emperor for the moment assured the peace with yet another large body of German auxiliaries, borderers of the Rhine sent to England under their King Fraomar.

Valentinian urgently sends successive commanders into Britain: Theodosius the last (in 368)

who clears all Britain of raiders by A.D. 370

It was the last effort. The province of Britain had been severely wounded. The government of the Empire was weakening in the West. The local generals (barbaric in birth and at the head of barbaric recruitment, though all part of the Roman Army) were achieving personal power. The central control of Gaul and Britain from distant Rome was failing.

In 383 a Spaniard in high command, Maximus, who had

Maximus is acclaimed Emperor in Britain, A.D. 383

already had experience in Britain under Theodosius, appealed to the troops in the island. They acclaimed him their Emperor, *and his subsequent attempt to make himself master of all the West drained away the last force sufficient to keep order in this island.* For he crossed the Channel immediately, taking with him a great body of the regular garrison and a mass of volunteers. These British troops followed his fortunes and ventures on the Continent. There, at last, in 388, he was put to death after his defeat at the hands of the great Theodosius, the son of the deliverer of Britain, now Emperor in the East, and, after this success, master of the whole Empire.

Drains away the garrisons

and is defeated and killed by Theodosius the Great

This fatal expedition was an irreplaceable loss to the British garrison, for most of the expeditionary force was lost. But this was not the only cause of decay. The separate commands of the West were already too strong, and the wars of their generals ended in governments as separate as their commands. Arbogast, a Frank (that is, a Belgian), in military command of the Imperial armies in Gaul, was too strong for Theodosius' colleague. When Theodosius, dying, left the West to his son, a boy of eleven, Honorius, the series continued. Stilicho—a great general—commanding the armies of Honorius, did something to check the perpetual raids in Britain, but yet another Roman general, Alaric (a German Goth by birth, though a Roman, of course, in habits, as Stilicho was a Slav Vandal by birth), rebelled with his command. Stilicho, in his struggle against his fellow general Alaric, recalled from Britain yet another remnant of the mobilizable regular force in the island (401-402). It never returned.

Stilicho still further drains the garrisons of Britain (401-2)

In 406 numerous and destructive raids across the Rhine into France interfered with the regular communication to the straits of Dover. The troops left in Britain were isolated. They appointed one ephemeral Emperor of the island after another, each murdered in turn, first a Marcus, then a Gratian (a Briton born), then another Briton, one Constantine.

Ephemeral Emperor of Britain

This last man, rising to control in 407, marks the end.

He also crossed the Channel to grasp the West, taking his troops with him, nor did these return. He was overcome in the Gauls and fell in 411.

But already the direct connection between the capital and Britain was broken. The taxes could no longer be gathered. The central military command exercised from Rome was gone for ever. The absence of Constantine led the Roman citizens of Britain, the British people, to neglect his claim and allegiance—even before his defeat in the far South. They and those on the opposing coast of France set up provincial governments to defend, as best they could, their remaining social organization with their remaining local garrisons for police under hereditary leaders.

They were all, of course, still Roman citizens, as I have called them: they could only think of themselves then, and for generations more, as part of one common Roman Empire; but the network of Western government was torn, and they stood isolated. They probably appealed for troops. None could be sent. From the date 410,[1] it is probable that Britain passed no further revenue hence to the central government at Rome; it is almost certain that after that date no garrisons or civil governors from thence came hither. The long descent into the Dark Ages had begun.

410, the citizens of Britain are left to their own military resources

The date 410 is thus an important landmark in the political history of England. But it must not be imagined that any sudden change then took place in the social state of this island. Men continued to live as they had lived before: they were Roman citizens—"*Cives*" as they continued to call themselves—using the Roman law in their courts, Roman money, and all the things common to our civilization; and feeling themselves still part of the "*Res Publica*," the Roman Commonwealth of Europe. Only, now that the centralized and United Government of Western Europe was wobbling on the Continent and no longer

[1] This was also the year in which one of the Roman generals of auxiliaries, Alaric, a Goth, after a mutiny he had provoked through a disappointment in promotion, and after varied fortunes, sacked Rome.

MAP IV

ENGLAND AT THE END OF THE DIRECT RULE FROM ROME, A.D. 300-400

functioning on this side of the Channel, it was more difficult to check marauding bands and to incorporate captured border-men and sea-pirates into the State.

While many troops were still under one command, it was possible to throw a considerable force now into Gaul, now into Britain, wherever it might be needed; and even as late as 400 or so the Slav Vandal, the Roman general Stilicho, commanding in Italy, had thrown such a force at short notice over the Channel to help Britain. But with such extra troops no longer available, England, thrown back on its own resources, could not fully cope with its difficulties, and fairly soon there developed local powers which could not be properly co-ordinated, even within the island. Each of the many towns was more and more left dependent on itself for its defence and government, and each of the districts or cantons into which the main divisions fell, the "Pagi," tended to come under the rule of some one important local family.

Society in England becomes a mass of petty local governments

Kinglets began to crop up in the increasing dissolution of society. Here one over a county, with other lesser ones beneath him in various districts; there a more powerful family controlling a wider area. We know hardly anything of the detail save on the analogy of the Continent at the same period, and from legends surviving to a later time, and from a few rare traditions. But that is clearly what happened in the main: the country fell into a number of districts and sub-districts, powerful local families taking on the lessening functions of government, chiefs establishing themselves in the various centres. Some of these would be commanders, elected or hereditary, of the troops remaining in Britain after the severance; some, great landowners; many, doubtless, on the coasts, were captains of the partly regular, largely piratical, crafts and their crews—of whom some at least had settled on land.

Thus we know that *Irish* sea-rovers (called "Scots"[1])

[1] The "Scot" was an inhabitant of Ireland, probably of north-eastern Ireland. He invaded the south-west corner of Scotland, and the later name has spread from that corner.

Sea-captains begin to settle on the coasts

got control of places on the south-west coasts even before the year 400; and by 450 or so the towns of entry by the sea from France—perhaps Richborough and probably several other ports—were governed by sea-captains of the North Sea, the rovers from the Rhine mouth and Netherlands borders and Frisia and the Elbe mouth.

But it was not coast settlements of this kind that formed the anxious problem of the moment in the England of 410 and onwards: it was the raids from the north. A settlement, whether of Irish on the west or of Saxons and Franks and Netherland men (Frisians) on the east and south-east shores, was, in its origin, accompanied by loot and slaughter; but, once established, it was a source of strength. Marauding bands of Highlanders from over the northern wall (Picts) and of Irish (Scots) settlers in the south-west of Scotland were a worse matter. They did nothing but harm. They kept on coming into the wealthy civilized open country and retiring with booty after having also destroyed in the fighting far more than they stole; and it was this raiding of the land which, more than anything else, broke up the Roman province into a mass of local governments, shifting and changing, now coalescing under a temporary leader, now breaking up again.

In spite of raids and impoverishment the framework of Roman society in Britain remains, and *religion* is the main concern of the time

Though the raids were the great political trouble of the moment and the chief cause of the very rapid decline which took place in all the arts—so that we have no literary remains from that period in Britain, nor even any appreciable monuments—we must not imagine that they were the chief concern of society. Society still "carried on" with its ancient divisions of landed property, its towns and its slaves and the rest, and Britain, like all the rest of civilization at this moment, was concerned above all with the great *religious* revolution of the time.

The conflict of 400-500 was a *religious* conflict throughout the Empire, not a racial one

All through the West the Catholic Church, organized under its hierarchy of Bishops and centred in Rome, was rapidly mastering the public mind. It had been free for a century, and for nearly as long it had been the official religion

of Gaul and Spain and Italy. All the leading men who influenced their fellows were absorbed in its struggle against its enemies. The time was not at all, as has been represented, a war of races; it was in no way a struggle between the Roman citizens and the barbarians. These had long been used to mingling. It was a war of ideas.

The Catholic Church had to deal, as it extended its power, with three forms of pagan resistance: (1) The remains of *popular* paganism in the provinces, especially in the remote country parts; (2) the paganism of the great aristocratic families, landowners of Gaul and Italy and Britain; (3) the paganism of northern barbaric settlers, slaves, and garrisons. (The North Sea pirates and settlers in Britain were pagan; so were the German-speaking auxiliary garrisons on the lower Rhine and Belgium, such as the Frankish troops of the Roman Army.)

It had also to deal with a strange side-issue that never affected this island, but had so great an effect upon the Continent, and therefore on the whole future life of Europe, that we must again return to it here; this was the *Arian* Heresy, to which belonged many of the auxiliary generals in the Roman Army who had begun to take over local government in Southern France and Spain, Africa and Italy.

Many Arian garrisons and governments of auxiliaries

Just at the time when the auxiliary troops under their chiefs—especially the Gothic troops—were becoming the most important body in the Roman armies, the court of Constantinople, the Emperor, the tone of the governing world there, was *Arian*. This court trained their generals, sent missionaries to their tribes, gave the social example. It was, as I have said, "fashionable," "the thing" to be Arian. And the impress so stamped on the barbarian auxiliaries in the fourth century endured through the fifth and even into the sixth. The kings, courts, and garrisons of the Goths in Italy and Gaul and Spain, of the Vandals in Africa, were of this kind: a ceaseless friction. In the midst of populations now mainly Catholic, the courts of these rulers and their troops were out of communion with the

The friction on the Continent between the new local governments and the people due to Arianism of the former

administrated masses. They had a mood and tradition of life different to the Catholic, hostile and disliked on account of this spiritual antagonism. Slowly, in the course of 200 years, the matter was righted. The Arian spirit died out through the effect of time; but in the meanwhile the division worked ill, and the whole of society was weakened and divided. The Catholic Church—aided by the new and powerful arm of Monasticism—triumphed and saved all that could be saved of civilization; but the effect of this delay and obstacle, the Arianism of the local governments in Southern France, Spain, and Italy, was enduring.

The state of Britain at the opening of the fifth century

In Britain Arianism seems never to have taken root. The religious movement was a spreading of the Faith, slowly perhaps (for it had begun here late and was still weak), throughout the mass; but with great areas of paganism remaining. But on the east coast of the island, the pagan settlers from overseas, joined by many of German speech already here since Roman times as soldiers and farmers, remained untouched by the extension of the creed.

Pelagius and his heresy

One heresy did powerfully affect England. It was that of PELAGIUS, a man born in this island though writing and propagating his doctrine in the countries of the Mediterranean. As Arius had rationalized the mystery of the Incarnation, so Pelagius rationalized that of Evil, of Original Sin. To judge the importance of these great conflicts between the Catholic Church and the heresies, we must note how each heresy has produced its special type of man and of society. Calvinism, Mohammedanism, any one of the dissensions from Catholic Unity, produces a novel sort of human being and State. To prevent such a development, to safeguard the unity and continuity of our culture, was the whole meaning of these vigorous and successful battles for Orthodoxy which filled the transition from Paganism to Christendom. That is why the literature and politics of the time, very rightly, lay far more stress on the religious issues than on the raids and disturbance of a distracted society.

Had Pelagianism, with its fundamental conception that man is sufficient to himself, indoctrinated any district, that district would have reverted, first to paganism and later to despair.

As it was, the idea took a strong momentary hold on England, the province of which Pelagius was a native, and might, save for the vigorous counter-attack of St. Germanus, have succeeded here.

Such was England at the opening of the fifth century, when the unity of the Roman Army in the West and of its government was dissolved. It was a country continuously civilized with the full Roman culture, but rapidly declining in the arts, harassed by Highland raids from the north, and pirate raids, Irish and Frisian and Saxon, on its western and eastern shores; seeing the beginnings of settlement by the sea-rovers; finding its towns more isolated and its districts falling under separate lords; but, in the midst of all this political dissolution and very rapid impoverishment, chiefly concerned with the great *religious* debate on which the thoughts of all men then turned: the conflict between the Catholic Church and the decay of paganism: the conflict between the Catholic Church and the heresies.

Upon the island in this last stage of its Roman moulding, in 410, there falls the strangest accident to be found in any province of the West. *Its history ceases.* Its records, if any were made, have disappeared. Close on 200 years pass behind a sort of curtain shutting off our knowledge. It rises again slowly in 597, with the return of letters and record through the Mission of St. Augustine.

This strange eclipse of English History between 410 and 597—through very nearly two whole centuries, the fifth and sixth—I have called "The Gap."

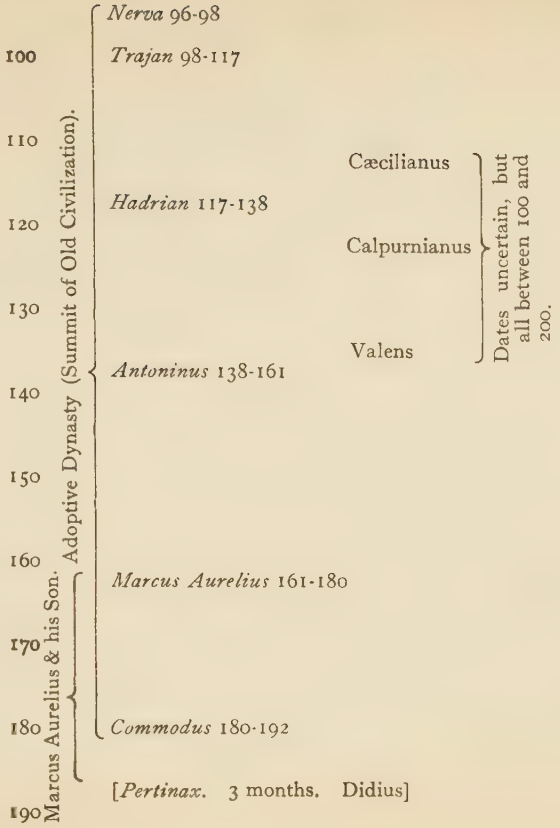
To the doubtful conjectures which have been made upon this "Gap," and to the certain conclusions we can arrive at, I next turn.

PAGAN ENGLAND

A.D. 43-A.D. 410

TABLE OF GOVERNMENT

A.D.		Emperors. Reign.	Names of Chief Judges in Britain Remaining to us.	Names of Local Governors of Britain Remaining to us.	Names of Procurators in Britain Remaining to us.
40	Julian House.	*Claudius* 41-54		Aulus Plautius 44-47	
50		*Nero* 54-68		Ostorius Scapula 47-51 Didius Gallus 51-57	
60		[Galba, Otho, Vitellius: 18 months]		Q. Veranius 53-59 Suetonius Paulinus 59-61 Petronius Turpilianus 61 Trebellius Maximus 61-69	Decianus 61 Classicianus 61
70	Vespasian and his Sons.	*Vespasian* 69-79		Vettius Bolanus 69-71 Petilius Cerialis 71-74 Julius Frontinus 74-77 Agricola 77-84	
80		*Titus* 79-81	Bassus 79		
		Domitian 81-96		Sallustius Lucullus (later than) 85 (earlier than) 96	
90			Priscus 90		Sabinianus



Nepos? 96-98
Ascidus Quietus—in 98 and perhaps later

Neratius Marcellus—in 103 and perhaps later — Marcellus

Agrippa 117-138

Pompeius Falco (about) 121-122

Julius Severus (about) 130, not after 134

Marcius 138-161

Lollius Urbicus (about) 143-146

Papinius Aelianus 146?

Julius Verus (about) 157-160

Licinius Italicus 161. *First attempt at separate government*

Calpurnius Agricola 161-169 — *Homulus* 180-192

Faustinus Postumianus (sometime between 169-180)

Ulpius Marcellus 170? — *Pansa*

Helvius *Pertinax* 185-187. *Second attempt at independent local rule in Britain*

TABLE OF GOVERNMENT (*continued*)

A.D.		EMPERORS. Reign.		Names of Local Governors of Britain Remaining to us.
	House of Severus.	*Septimius Severus* 193 211		Septimius ALBINUS 187. Declared *Cæsar*. Then (195) EMPEROR in Britain. Dies 197. *Third attempt at independent rule in Britain*
200			197. Britain henceforward two Provinces. No certain knowledge to which Province a name refers.	Virius Lupus 197 Adventus, Rufus, Vettonianus } 197-205
210		*Caracalla* 211-217 (and *Geta*) (Macrinus)		Senecio 205-208 GETA 208-209, during his father's, the Emperor's, life-time.
220		*Heliogabalus* 218-222		Marcus . . . 213 G. Julius . . . between 211 and 217 Modius Julius, between 211 and 217 Marcellus, between 211 and 217 Marius Valerianus, between 211 and 222 Claudius Paulinus 220
		Alexander Severus 222-235		Appellinius ? Octavus Sabinus, Valerius Fulvianus } before 235 Xenophon
230				Maximus (225 ?) . . . ccianus (237) Nonius Philippus 242 Egnatius Lucilianus 244 (before) Desticius Fuscus 244 (before) Desticius Juba, between 253-259
240	Period of Confusion.	*Maximin* 235-238 (Civil wars. The 3 Gordians)		All these imperfectly known and only through monuments, etc.
		Philip 244-249		
		Decius 249-251		
250		(Gallus (with Hostilianus) Æmilianus)		
		Valerian 253-260 } Period of chaos of independent generals		
260		*Galienus* 260-268 }		

270 — Restoration of Empire.

Claudius II. 268-270
Aurelian 270-274
(Interregnum, 8 months)
Tacitus 276 (six months)
Probus 276-282

280

Carus 282-283
Carinus (and Numerian) 283-284
Diocletian 284-305

290 — Diocletian System.

Maximian colleague in West 286 (Cæsars)

300

Constantius Chlorus (in West) 305-306; *Galerius* in East
Constantine 307-313

310

320

Death of *Licinius* in East
Constantine sole Emperor 324

330

House of Constantius.

Constantius II. 337-361. First with Brothers *Constantine II.* and *Constans.* Then sole Emperor from 350

340

350

Julian Cæsar in West 355

360

Julian the Apostate 361-363

CARAUSIUS. Proclaimed Independent Emperor in Britain 287-294

ALLECTUS. Proclaimed Independent Emperor in Britain 294-297

297. Diocletian's great Administrative Reform. Britain henceforward a *Diocese* under a *Vicarius*, and divided into four (later five) Provinces

Constantius Chlorus. Cæsar in the West. In Britain 297 and 305

CONSTANTINE 306. Acclaimed in Britain

Flavius Sanctus, one of the provincial governors (Richborough)

MAGNENTIUS, usurping in Gaul, has power over Britain (350)
Ducentius [brother of Magnentius] has power over Britain (353)
Alypius, vicar of Britain (about 355 ?)
Lupicinus, sent into Britain by Julian, 360

Theodosius, the elder, commanding in Britain 368

TABLE OF GOVERNMENT (*continued*)

A.D.	EMPERORS. Reign.	Names of Local Governors of Britain Remaining to us.
370	*Jovian* 363-364 *Valentinian* 364-375; *Valens* in East	*Civilis*, vicar of Britain 369
380	House of Theodosius. *Gratian* 378-383 *Theodosius the Great* 379-387 *Maximus* in West } By leave of *Valentinian II.* in West } Theodosius	MAXIMUS. Declared Independent Emperor in Britain 383. Crosses to Continent. Killed 388 *Crysanthius*, vicar of Britain 388
390		
400	*Arcadius* 388 in East. *Honorius* 388 in West *Theodosius II.* 408	MARCUS. Acclaimed Independent Emperor in Britain 407 GRATIAN. Acclaimed Independent Emperor in Britain 407 CONSTANTINE. Acclaimed Independent Emperor in Britain 407
410		410. *End of Direct Official Relation with Rome*

CATHOLIC ENGLAND:

I. THE DARK AGES

Introduction to the Dark Ages

CATHOLIC ENGLAND

THE DARK AGES (410-1066)

INTRODUCTION TO THE DARK AGES

THE Dark Ages—which are also called upon the Continent "the Higher Middle Ages"—form a period of which it is difficult to fix the exact boundaries. The process by which the high civilization of the Roman Empire declined was complicated and very gradual, even in the West. In the East the Greek culture survived in more fullness to the beginnings of modern times. The Latin half of the Empire changed in its structure more profoundly, and lost more of its literary and material skill, until, in the lowest stage of the process—round about the year 900—the loss is so surprisingly great that the revival which followed in little more than a century is almost equally surprising. But the beginnings of this decline are imperceptible, its pace for many generations is very slow. Men hardly perceive it as it advances, and the consequences of the decay arise unnoticed.

A mechanical scheme, excellent for fixing the main lines, divides our era into sections of 500 years. It allots the first section, A.D. 1-500, to a western society still consciously civic, Roman, one. It calls the centuries A.D. 500-1000 the Dark Ages. It calls those from 1000 to 1500 the Middle Ages. After A.D. 1500 events are reckoned as belonging to modern times.

This 500 year unit is useful for a first instruction and to fix the simplest outline in a reader as yet quite unacquainted with the elements of Europe, but it is, of course,

insufficient. The darkening of the old pagan civilization began long before the end of formal administration by the Western Emperors; a degree of change sufficient to admit

MAP V

THE LEAST AREA OF CHRISTENDOM WHICH REMAINED FREE FROM MOHAMMEDAN AND PAGAN PRESSURE DURING THE DARK AGES, A.D. 500-800

of the term "Dark Ages" was arrived at in Britain earlier than the year 500.

For the purposes of English history, dealing as it does

with an extreme province, cut off by the sea, and early ceasing to receive orders from, or to send taxes to Rome, our first date must be that after which the full Imperial service ceased to function, and the various districts of the

MAP VI

THE EXPANSION OF CHRISTENDOM AT THE END OF THE DARK AGES, 800-1100, AFTER ITS VICTORIOUS DEFENCE AGAINST PAGAN AND MOHAMMEDAN PRESSURE

island were thrown back upon local rulers; that is the date we have chosen, A.D. 410.

Further, the period is, in Britain, extended at its later boundary. The revival of civilization may be placed in Gaul with the first of the Cluniac movement and the rise

of the Capetian Dynasty in the early eleventh century, or with the contemporary awakening of Norman effort—say 1020-1030. But in England, though there is a permeation of the new culture under Edward the Confessor, the change does not really come till it comes suddenly with the Conquest in 1066. It is the Battle of Hastings which abruptly opens the Middle Ages in England, and right up to that late date a barbaric incoherence still attaches to dynastic succession, art, and law.

Whether we consider the general dates A.D. 500 to A.D. 1000 or the limits specially applicable to England—A.D. 410 to A.D. 1066—it is important to carry with us as we read some idea of society during that great lapse of time.

Its general characteristics were the substitution of personal domestic things for general and official; a lessening of economic effort; a corresponding indifference to the Arts; of letters as of building, painting, statuary, and all decoration; a strangely level continuity in external forms of armour, building, dress, and expression; a lowering of the critical faculty, and therefore of science in history, physics, and geography; the admission therefore of legend and distortion (but with it of glamour); a sort of naturalness in all action, but also, with that, a very insufficient standard of judgment: a rooted attachment to the past and to tradition as the sole guarantee for the survival of a civilization in peril of dissolution, yet a forgetfulness of what the remote past was really like; an uprising everywhere of local custom, local government within the narrowest boundaries—though the sense of European unity was never lost, travel was continuous, and ecclesiastical life universal and in close touch with all its parts; a corresponding loosening of bonds with whatever claimed to be, or was admitted as, a central power; the gradual worsening of roads and of all construction.

The pioneers of modern history, historians writing from the later eighteenth century onwards, through more than

half the nineteenth, erroneously connected the material decline into the Dark Ages with the triumph of the Catholic Church. They even connected the two as cause and effect, and regarded the acceptation of the Faith as the general source of material decay. Under the much fuller examination of our own day this misconception has become impossible, and no one with a claim to historical sense would now make it.

It was natural that such an error should arise, for there had preceded the first writers of modern history—such as Gibbon—the Encyclopædic Movement in France which predisposed all educated Europe to the thesis that an admission of mystery destroys the powers of the mind. To such a mood the evident historic fact that the decline of material civilization in the West proceeded side by side with the extension of the Faith in the West appeared as a connection of cause and effect too obvious to question, and even those ardent in defence of Catholicism were so influenced by the air of their time that they would excuse this supposed development by pleading the superior value of moral to material things. One might as well suppose that the rich outburst of lyric verse in England during the last 100 years was a product of the exactly contemporary increase of the popular press.

The historic truth is that the Catholic Church preserved all that could be preserved of a culture stricken long before she had power or even numbers; that the Christian mode alone permitted the survival of an Europe which, but for its being thus caught up in first rapid processes of decay, would have fallen very quickly into barbarism; and that high discipline and organization (which are in the very essence of Church government when Faith, not opinion, is to be preserved), the military temper native to Catholicism, carried our race through the tremendous test of such prolonged invasion, fatigue, and forgetfulness.

A summary but conclusive proof may suffice :—

(1) The material decline is sharp after the Antonines (A.D. 192)—long before the Church had any appreciable power over the mass of men.

(2) The East remained, in Constantinople, of the highest culture, combined with a complete and continual Christian faith.

(3) Wherever the Church failed, barbarism supervened in the Dark Ages.

(4) Wherever she advanced, culture returned or expanded, and she acquired for our civilization all that Scandinavian, Slav, and German north which pagan culture had failed to reach.

It is further important to realize the level of the Dark Ages. Relatively to Pagan Rome, to Renaissance Europe, relatively to the splendour of the Middle Ages, the Dark Ages seem materially degraded. But the difference of level is insignificant compared with that between the Christian of the Dark Ages and the pagan barbarian at his side, or the barbarism into which districts *did* fall when the Church was absent.

Europe from 400-500 to 1000 discussed, armed, wrote, built, legislated after a fashion infinitely removed from savagery, or even from sterility. It was bound by routine, but never fell below a sufficient standard. Its record was continuous, and its script patient, noble, and clear—far more impressive than the cursive of later and more developed times. It bred characters of marvellous strength in sanctity and in lesser exercises of the will. It was a worthy parent to the great mediæval age which sprang from it. Above all, the diminished culture of the Dark Ages could *preserve*.

We shall be fortunate indeed if our own modern chaos shall find, after our coming and rapid decline, successors as well equipped as were the generations which handed on to us all our possessions, from the day [1] when the Roman Senate

[1] A.D. 394.

finally lost (alas!) the Altar of Victory to that[1] in which Hildebrand the Tuscan met the Alsatian Bruno under the Jura and set out on foot to restore the world.

. . . . . .

As we approach the English Dark Ages, with origins more obscure than those of any other western province, and before we examine that strange *hiatus* in our history which leaves us almost without authority for the British entry into the Dark Ages, we shall do well to conclude this general sketch with a view of how civilization as a whole entered this period: of what it was into which all Roman society—England with the rest—was turned as the fifth century came upon it.

The great change in the West from 400-500 onwards ran on the Continent upon certain lines, well known from fairly full records and from the ascertained results. The change in Britain was all part of the same movement, though it differed in one capital point—the cutting of communications at the Straits of Dover, which prevented civilization, as it declined, from influencing this island; whereas on the Continent travel was free and continuous from place to place, and so there was no sudden extinction; the centre, Rome, continued to influence fully, though no longer to tax. If, therefore, we make ourselves familiar with the known process across the Channel, we can argue from it to the unknown process in this island.

On the Continent the change of A.D. 400-600 is marked by the following characters:—

(I) (and much the most important). The Catholic Church in these two centuries converted the whole West. All the pagans within the Empire became Catholic. All the heretical local governments in the West became Catholic. At the end of the process all originally Romanized Europe was Catholic *except a certain belt along the frontiers* in Belgium,

[1] A.D. 1049.

along the Rhine and on the Danube, where anarchy had destroyed the social structure—of this more in a moment.

Henceforward—after, say, 600—the whole story of civilization is the maintenance and extension of the Catholic Church. The Church and civilization are henceforward synonymous. Where the Church is you have writing and reading and building and the arts: though declined from their old excellence. There also you have the classics preserved and the keeping of record. Outside the Catholic area all is barbaric. But later the missionaries of all Christian lands (especially Ireland), and the Christian armies of France, gradually spread civilization northward and eastward through the Germanies, up to the line of the Elbe, throughout the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries.

(II) The Government of the Roman Empire goes through a slow revolution, of which these are the marks:—

(*a*) The shifting of the centre of government to the East by Constantine, when he took the chief ministries and the seat of Empire to Constantinople, in 324, weakens the West. Rome is no longer the real capital. Therefore it is difficult to govern the provinces directly connected with Rome (Italy, Spain, France, England, North Africa).

(*b*) The army, already mainly recruited from barbarians, and largely from Germans, provides local governments for the provinces, under the local military commanders.

The reason of this last change is the transformation of the Roman Army. The Roman Army, *which was the one great institution upon which the Empire reposed*, had passed through successive changes, as we have seen, and was, by this time—

(1) mainly barbaric in recruitment;

(2) wholly sedentary, that is, each part residing in and recruited from its own province;

(3) partly hereditary and agricultural ;
(4) made up of highly independent commands ; and
(5) divided into regulars and auxiliaries, the latter especially barbaric, possessing especial independence and usually commanded by tribal chiefs.

Now the last great change in the Roman Army, which determined the change in western local government, was a rapid development of points (4) and (5). The local commands grew more and more independent ; the auxiliaries became more and more important compared with the regulars.

They all continued, of course, to think of themselves as Roman soldiers. They had the Roman organization, military ranks, traditions, and all that made a Roman military force. But the various sections acted more and more as independent bodies following individual generals, and these bodies were in increasing proportion auxiliaries, not regulars ; groups commanded by the hereditary Slav and German chieftains already described, who were Roman generals first and foremost, but also, to their commands, petty barbarian leaders (*reges*).

The consequence of this last phase in the Roman military system was threefold :—

(*a*) Continual struggles between the generals, usually arising from the ambition of each to take part in government, to claim more pay, or even only to acquire some important title of honour from the Empire.
(*b*) An added difficulty in stopping those raids of *marauding bands* and *refugees*, coming from the now half-civilized outer belt of Europe, the belt beyond the Danube and up to the Elbe mouth and Danish isthmus (Goths, Franks, Suabians, Saxons, Angles, Frisians), which had perpetual dealings with civilization and wanted to enjoy its advantages

without undertaking its burdens. The raiding bands were always at last destroyed by the Roman armies, regular and auxiliary; their members killed, sold as slaves, or forced as new recruits into the army. The refugees were always accepted, and settled and turned into part of the civilized community. But the pace quickened. The numbers to be dealt with, though always small compared with the civilized world, grew larger, and the disturbances more frequent.

(*c*) Local government tended more and more to fall into the hands of the local generals, and the chief central government to be of less effect in proportion to the distance at which it had to act from its new seat in Constantinople.

The consequence was that, *first*, local military governments became the only effective ones in the extremely distant parts, especially those difficult of access; *secondly*, *the belt along the northern and western frontiers, where the refugees and marauders from outside passed most often, got overrun, and order and civilization were trodden out of it.*

This belt was everywhere narrow, and extended in proportion to the difficulty of communication. Thus beyond the difficult Alpine country a strip along the Upper Danube was ruined, as was the Black Forest. The Lower Rhine and Belgium, cut off by the Ardennes and the marshes, though not ruined entirely, fell back badly, and were soon mainly pagan, wholly under petty local chiefs. The eastern margin of Britain, from somewhere about Southampton Water right up to the Forth, fell back thus.

But the case of Britain was peculiar: (1) It was the most remote province of all; (2) its main communication with the civilized world was by a narrow avenue, the Straits of Dover, and when the land behind these straits was overrun, Britain was cut off; (3) (and most important) Britain was subject to marauding raids *from all sides*, not from

the East only, like Gaul, nor only from the North, like the Basin of the Danube, but from the West, North, and East; from the Channel to the South as well. Indeed, wherever a Highlander could come by land from the Scotch mountains, or an Irish or Dutch or German pirate by sea from the Forth right round by the Thames and Severn to the Clyde, raiders appeared.

If Britain had not been an island, the eastern belts being lost to order would not have mattered. It could have been recovered, as it was on the Continent. Being an island, the destruction of a narrow strip—but a strip commanding the communications with Europe — isolated England altogether.

(III) The local governments in the hands of the local generals (heads of auxiliary troops, who soon became the *only* Roman troops available) regarded themselves as the deputies of the emperors. But the Emperor in the *West*, at Ravenna and Rome, lost all power, and they ceased to pass him the taxes. The Emperor in the East, in Constantinople, though he was regarded as the Head of the World, was not their direct chief, and therefore did not ask them for accounts; later, when they had established their local governments, he accepted the position. The Western Emperor was without authority during the civil wars between the generals (Alaric sacks Rome in 410, Genseric raids Africa in 430 and makes himself supreme there, etc.) in 476, his regalia were sent to his Eastern colleague, with whose office his own was merged, and the sole Emperor was henceforward the monarch of the Christian world in Constantinople.

The image of that sole Emperor still appeared on the coinage of the West. His reign was the standard for calculating dates and making documents and events in the West. He was, as I have said, the "Head of the World." He sent, at first, his own barbaric auxiliary generals Odoacer, Theodoric, to govern in the West; but they acted more and more

independently, until, in the particular case of Italy, he had to undertake a reconquest.

By the end of this process the Emperor from Constantinople only directly governs the East and part of Italy and Africa. The western provinces, Gaul and Spain, get more and more accustomed to regard the descendants of their local military governors as the only real authority. They became—though still regarding themselves as part of the Empire—local *kings*.

(IV) In the absence of an Emperor in the West the Pope—the Head of the Church—becomes the leading figure. He is a subject of Constantinople, and always refers to the Emperor in Constantinople as the head of civil government. But he has jurisdiction over Rome. He is the natural chief of the local western governments in Gaul and Spain and Italy, because he is the head of the Church, which has become the one universal principle of authority. No civil force in the West can compare with the Bishop of Rome. The Church is the driving-power everywhere, and the Apostolic See is its centre and authority. It is as though modern capitalism had one directing head. The Church—with the Pope at its summit—is the only omnipresent power in the West. The Church's new monastic institution, her authority exercised by the Bishops, her law are the strongest things in society. The local governments are less important in men's minds—even when they are under one head over large areas like Spain or three-quarters of France.

(V) Certain things hidden under the uniformity of the former highly civilized Empire begin to pierce through as the Dark Ages advance. Local popular dialects oust the official Latin in common speech; German dialects do the same all over the Netherlands and Belgium and in the Rhine Valley as far as the Vosges; Celtic speech in Western Gaul, and a great many Celtic words and tones in Central Gaul; while the popular forms of Latin, varying district

by district, begin to form the various provincial forms of the Romance Languages.

(VI) On the material side, the life of Europe rapidly declines. The Arts become conventional and their execution clumsy. The best of the old literary work is preserved by careful copying, but very little new work is added to it. Architecture dwindles in scale and coarsens in detail, while sculpture becomes grotesquely inadequate. On the other hand, a large number of new things take their origin at some time in the Dark Ages. The first moment in which most of them appeared is unknown, but a quantity are seen in the ninth century, for instance, which were unknown in the fourth. The square book of leaves replacing the roll, stirrups for riding, horse-shoeing, etc. Most of these inventions came from the continued civilization of Byzantium, whose Emperor was still the acknowledged overlord of West as well as East, and whose culture remained very high for centuries.

(VII) The structure of Roman society remained intact. This is a most important point, which marks the character of the transition into the Dark Ages. All remained Roman : agriculture, social usage, traditions, coinage, instruments—everything.

No new customs, institutions, things or ideas, came in from the half-barbarous borders. They had none to give. All they had was from Rome. Also, the men who filtered in were not nations nor even tribes, they were only armed bands from a few hundreds to a few thousand strong, merged in the Empire; and they sank at once into the Imperial social system. But that system became rapidly personal and primitive in character. Local superstitions and popular tendencies had full play. Thus payment for injury done, according to the scale of the injury and of the person injured, replaced the old impersonal criminal procedure of the former high civilization. *Councils* begin to play a great part, each ruler is surrounded by such a gathering (bishops,

rich landowners, officers of the court). The one new social feature present wherever society was Catholic is the *Monastery*. It consists in a group of devout celibates, gathered in one community under a paternal head or abbot. It owns land and slaves, labours to till the soil and clear woodlands and drain marsh, acquires an increasing revenue, builds, founds markets. The *Monastery* as a characteristic institution of the transition preserves letters and the arts and the structure of the old culture. It is firmly rooted in the West by the fifth century, given its rule and final stamp by St. Benedict in the sixth, and is the main support of society for many centuries onward. To found and endow a monastery is the chief social act of the time.

(VIII) The economic frame of the old world remains intact in its main lines. It is Roman everywhere. The unit is the *villa*, that is, the large agricultural estate tilled by slaves and yielding a fixed yearly rent to its owner. The public authority (formerly the Emperor, now the local king) holds the largest number of *villas*, and also the heaths and forests outside their scheme. Below him a group of large landowners with several *villas* each—sometimes a great number and usually scattered. These owners are mostly laymen, descended from the old Roman landowners, but also ecclesiastical functionaries (bishops) and the monasteries. Emolument and wealth are everywhere measured in, and founded upon, the Roman land rents, which become customary and unchanging and continue for centuries as the basis of all the greater fortunes. Public revenue diminishes rapidly; taxation is more and more remitted, and also harder to gather. It is raised on (1) a fixed *landed assessment* to which exceptions, and out of which gifts, are perpetually being made; and (2) on bridge, ferry, road, and market *tolls*, which also are perpetually being remitted as time goes on. Till at last the king—the public authority—is thought of rather as a very rich man living on a private income from his estates than as the receiver and adminis-

trator of public funds. There survive in the towns "colleges" or guilds of artisans, for all free handicraft at the end of the Empire was organized in strict and highly protected exclusive unions.

All this Continental process we may be sure went on in England just as it did in France and Spain and Italy and in the Rhone Valley; but with this difference, that England was *cut off*. Certain evils were therefore exaggerated. Literature, for instance, died out altogether in the East of England, and nearly in the West; and building must have fallen into a very degraded state. But the main lines were here what they were on the Continent. Bad raids shook and degraded society here as there. But the Roman *villa* remained the social unit, the towns survived, the local governor or king administered the Imperial domain—which also survived—and Britain, like the Continent, went through a process of social decline, indeed, but did not suffer any interruption of its continuous social life. For the main elements seen at the entry of England into historical eclipse shortly after A.D. 400 are discovered surviving when she emerges again into history just before A.D. 600.

I

The Gap

A.D. 410–A.D. 597

187 Years

I

THE GAP

THE CUTTING OFF OF BRITAIN

(A.D. 410–A.D. 597—187 Years)

AT this point in our history there happens to England, as I have said, an extraordinary thing: a thing the like of which cannot be paralleled in any other part of Europe.

The whole province gets cut off from civilization and recorded history for nearly 200 years.

Now it is of the utmost importance to guess rightly what happened in that 200 years; for if we guess wrongly we shall misunderstand the whole subsequent history of the English. On what happened in those 200 years depends the answer to the question: "*How* did England come to be what it was in the Dark and Middle Ages?"—and, indeed, what it is to-day.

For these six generations came at the moment when the old pagan civilization was transformed, when strict central government, exercised from Rome, broke down, when the local governments arose (out of which at last the great European nations were to come); when the very first beginnings of popular languages began to show, above the surface of the official Greek and Latin, and when the Catholic Church succeeded in converting the whole West, and so saving all that could be saved of the Roman culture which had been in imminent peril of death.

In all that great space of time—187 years: the space that separates Victoria from Charles I—we have exactly two documents concerning Britain: one, the life of a French Bishop, St. Germanus, who came over here at the beginning of the period; the other a confused, very obscure, piece of rhetoric written just in the middle of the darkness by St. Gildas, a monk belonging to some part of the West of Britain, probably South Wales.

Other immediate evidence there is none. Hundreds of years later a mass of *legends* were written down in the various dialects of the island—Welsh and Saxon, and in Latin. Nennius, for instance; and the odd mixture of fragmentary record, legend, and vague tradition which is now called the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle." But they only help us to guess at the broadest outlines; they do not tell us any reliable facts on "The Gap;" they are not history.

The first contemporary document, the life of St. Germanus (about A.D. 480, and referring to events of forty years earlier), tells us hardly anything about what was going on in England politically. It is concerned with the great and absorbing religious affair of the time, the combating of the Pelagian heresy among English Christians, and the conversion of English pagans. You get an allusion to one Scottish raid, but no details worth having.

The second, the writing of St. Gildas (a long lifetime later), does give us three or four valuable points, but these are embedded in the midst of a mass of obscure rhetoric, and of muddled, often false, memories; for West England had, by his time, been cut off from civilization much longer than any memory could reach, and literature, with all other culture, had sunk very low.

We learn from St. Gildas how Britain, like all the other parts of Western civilization, had suffered grievously (after the cutting off of military supply) from raiding bands of Scotch barbarians, and later from a very bad pirate raid coming from the North Sea coast. We also learn that this

raid was beaten back, and that for something like a lifetime —up to the time of Gildas' writing—there had been peace.

Regular historical record ceases, then, for England in 410. It does not begin afresh until 597; and it is a long time after that before we get full and regular chronicles.

Early in the period of the "Gap" reading and writing declined, even in the west of the island, while in the east they died out altogether, probably in the second generation after 410. The beginnings of the Catholic Church spread in the extreme west (Wales, Cornwall, and Devon, the Lakes) till everyone there was at last Christian; but after a starved, imperfect manner, cut off from the rest of the Church. In the East and the Midlands they withered. These Christian origins *may* have been wholly extinguished in the East and centre of Britain during the ceaseless petty wars; at any rate, the bishoprics disappeared. When the missionaries sent by Rome came back in 597, it took them a long time, pretty well half a century, to reintroduce to the eastern fringe of the island all the arts that go with civilization and the Christian religion, especially writing and record. It took them another century to spread culture throughout the Midlands and into remote corners such as Sussex, the old county of the Regni, then isolated on its coast beyond its belt of forest.

Record, then, fails us wholly for nearly 200 years, and is imperfect for a 100 more.

How are we to bridge this gap?

The task is not so hopeless as it would seem, for we have *two* very valuable and extensive kinds of indirect information, and *one* slight direct kind of information.

(I) In the *first* place—as indirect evidence—we know pretty well what England was like at the beginning of the "Gap," and also what England was like at the end of it. We see a tendency beginning at one end, and we see the results of the tendency at the other; we can, therefore, though only very vaguely, estimate the course of the development in

between. And we must remember that civilization has a strong momentum, and that things do not change in a day. The young men born in England as late as A.D. 440, say, were full Roman citizens. Their grandsons lived to see the landing of St. Augustine.

(II) In the *second* place—as indirect evidence—we have a fairly full knowledge of what happened in the Danish pirate raids of 300 years later. Now these were very like the pirate raids of 450-500: they also came from the North Sea; they also were carried out by much the same kind of pagans; they also resulted in some settlement, used boats of much the same size, etc. So from this *known* example we can build up some fairly certain conclusions on the unknown or hardly known pirate raids of the "Gap."

(III) We have the slight but direct evidence, in the third place, of the two documents just mentioned, the life of St. Germanus and the writing of St. Gildas.

I will take these three pieces of evidence in their order, beginning with the indirect evidence afforded by the state in which England entered and emerged from the "Gap" in her history.

(I) The State of England in A.D. 410, the Entry into the "Gap," and in 597 the Exit Therefrom

England in A.D. 410, the year after which Rome no longer reinforces the army in the island, nor (so far as we know) gathers taxes there for the central government, was a Roman province like any other, with towns on the Roman plan, great roads, the Roman system of agriculture in large estates tilled by slaves: a small but increasing Christian body under bishops, three of whose sees we know (London, Lincoln, and York). Probably, judging by Pope Gregory's later plan of restoration, there were twenty-six—twelve suffragan to York as metropolitan and twelve to London. We know that nine at least survived in the extreme west—

St. David's, Landaff, Bangor, St. Asaph, Llandaburn, Candida Casa in Galloway, Glasgow, and two in Cornwall and Devon. The wealthier people and many in the towns knew, and most could speak, Latin, which was the language of administration and the courts ; but the mass of the people, especially in the country-sides, spoke local dialects. In the west these were a mixture of Celtic and Latin. On the east coast and the south coast, as far as Dorsetshire, there were *probably* a number of other dialects which were a mixture of German and Latin. But we are less certain of this. We have seen how the name " Saxon shore " would come from the continual settlement for generations of slaves and mercenary soldiers taken by the Romans and set down here by the Imperial authorities to cultivate the soil and to defend the southern and eastern coast with its towns, and to support the local rulers in arms. The places from which these settlers came—the Rhine Valley, Holland, most of Belgium, the German coast by the mouths of the Weser and the Elbe—were all strongly influenced by the neighbouring Roman civilization, to and from which they continually passed, and innumerable terms of whose official Latin and Greek tongues had soaked into their dialects, until these had become an inextricable tangle of barbaric words [1] and civilized words corrupted into a barbaric form.

As we have seen, these coast Germans and Frisians had served in Roman ships, and had learnt from the civilized

[1] See pp. 14, 33. Note also the fact that the barbarians had adopted the Roman week, translating, or, more likely, having translated for them by missionaries and merchants, the Roman divinities by their own. Thus *Dies Solis* is Sun-day ; *Dies Lunæ*, Mon-day ; *Dies Martis* (the God of War), Tius-day ; *Dies Mercurii* (the God of Civil Life), Wodens-day ; *Dies Jovis* (the God of Thunder and Power), Thors-day ; *Dies Veneris* (the Goddess of Love), Frigga's-day. Saturday they bolted whole, without change, keeping the term " Day of Saturn," a god whom perhaps they could not match. They never got the idea of a *month*-name translated ; that would have meant a calendar and was beyond them. Charlemagne tried hard to get the barbaric Germans to accept month-names in their own tongue, but it would not go down. They had, at last, to adopt the civilized names as they stood, January to December, all Latin.

men how to build ships. Very many of them, and their inland brethren, had served in the Roman armies, and their leaders were perfectly familiar with the Roman local courts, many of them with the Imperial court itself.

This English society at the beginning of the Dark Ages was made up of a small minority of great landholders, who were getting more and more powerful each in his own district, and were ready to exercise (some probably were already exercising) political power, judging, and administrating. Below these were a larger body of poorer freemen. Below these again the bulk of the population, who were slaves.

It is this disproportion between the few rich, the small minority of freemen (all attached to some patron), and the vast mass of slaves, which explains what happened. For instance, it explains how great a change quite a few raiders could make in a district by weakening and mixing with the small rich class. It explains how a language could spread from the very few masters to the mass of their serfs. It also explains the ease with which a new growth like the Church, dependent for supply and protection on only a part of the small rich class might disappear in a time of anarchy. It equally explains how the Church, when it returned, could spread by capturing the local ruler's court. It explains the difficulty of raising an armed force in Roman Britain, and the consequent great effect of small hostile bodies of pirates and settlers. It explains the absence of opinion.

England, in 597, the year when the Roman missionaries landed again, still retained its Roman-founded towns, though probably smaller in population, and somewhat poorer than they had been before the breakdown of 200 years earlier. It still had its great Imperial roads—though these had got broken down at many of the river-crossings, and the straight Roman causeways over the marshes were now often replaced by winding stretches of hardened way picking from one dryer piece to another, while the lesser bridges were either roughly rebuilt in new places, or replaced by ferries. It had

the same unbroken traditional system of Roman agriculture and the same Roman social division into a few powerful landowners, a minority of lesser freemen, and a mass of slaves. The local units of the land—such as we can trace—are the old local units or " civitates " of the earlier Roman time : Kent is a unit to this day, Sussex, Dorset, Devon, the " Pomerium," or municipal territory of London (Middlesex), Essex of the Trinobantes and East Anglia of the Iceni ;[1] the territory of the Roman town of Lincoln can be identified also, and the northern divisions under their old native Latinized names of Deira and Bernicia. There are also many other features of the older civilization, which we see still standing when record re-appears after A.D. 600 : Roman symbols carried before military chiefs ; the old Roman coinage, not replaced by any native coinage for centuries ; and Roman social and military ranks ; the *Comes*, or *Sub-regulus* of the county, the *Dux*, the *Decanus*—terms later translated into the local dialects by the priests, who founded their schools there, and moved westward as the Catholic religion ousted the pagans and schismatics in its advance towards the Severn and the Parret, from the first missions of the Eastern courts. And with the schools and the religion spread also westward the original mixed German and Latin dialects of those little Eastern kinglets.

England, then, during the " Gap " must have carried on her Roman civilization in the main, because on emerging from the " Gap " her local boundaries, social distinctions, and towns and agriculture and her economic structure are much the same as at her entry into it.

But a man leaving England in 410 and returning in 597 would also have marked very great changes.

In the first place, the England of 410 was still one Roman province ; the England of 597 was ruled by a mass of petty

[1] Save for the pre-Roman division by the Waveney later called " North-folk " and " South-folk ".

local chieftains. It had no unity. The whole island was broken up into a mosaic of small districts, each with its little king. There may have been more than a hundred of them. There were certainly more than fifty. It is impossible to estimate a number, because the districts varied in size, as one ruler would seize land or would lose it, and still more, because there were subordinate and superior rulers, each with the local title of king.

We have very few known "kingships": in 597 only one, the old Roman division of Kent, with its little local king sitting in Canterbury (and Kent had under-kings). But within a short lifetime after that time we identify many more. There is a sort of main kinglet (doubtless with subordinate "kings") over Norfolk and Suffolk, another over Essex, another over Sussex, another over the plain of York and the sea coast adjacent, another over the northern stretch of the same sea coast, another over the Northern Midlands, with a chief subordinate over the South Midlands; one in Winchester and the Middle Thames—and so on, in all the East and centre. In the West identification is more difficult, because when civilization came back slowly from 600 to 700 with the Roman and Gallic missionaries, it trained the East to some sort of exactitude in record, but left the West cut off, so that, in the place of history, we have only wild Welsh legend. But we can, none the less, see similar arrangement there: a number of local kings with a much larger number of sub-kings under them, shifting boundaries, and uncertain units: a very dust of "kingships" which mean only "chieftainships," dividing up the whole ruined island.

You get such small districts grouped round Roman towns as the surroundings of Gloucester and the surroundings of Bath and of Cirencester. Each of these three towns is said by tradition to have had its little, local, legendary king in the period just before the landing of the Roman missionaries who were to re-establish England.

The next thing we note is that this welter of tiny kingships was not homogeneous. They all made war on each other indiscriminately, and grouped one with another in temporary alliances which dissolved as soon as made. Their little armies raided in long marches and retreats all across each other's territories and back again. There is a legend or tradition of a Winchester king raiding westward, just before the missionaries came, as far as the Severn ; and we have later clear, certain, and historical and detailed record of a Welsh king raiding eastward up to the North Sea coast, firmly holding York and nearly taking Bamborough.

But in the hotch-potch there are two clear divisions. The *courts* of the Eastern kings were pagan in 597 ; the *courts* of the Western kings were Christian. Odd practices had crept in to Western Britain during the long isolation ; the Western bishoprics had lost touch with Europe. But in Western England the Mass was still universal, the Sacraments were administered, the priesthood was regularly ordained. In Eastern England the courts were pagan.

What of the people whom these little kings governed ? Their nobles (that is, the few rich landowners), their freemen, and the mass of slaves ?

It is important here to appreciate a fundamental character of that time. The Roman Empire had planted deep in all men's minds the idea of *Sacred Monarchy*. A king was a king, no matter on how small a scale. He was addressed in terms that derive from Diocletian. He wore the Roman diadem ; he inherited the Imperial houses and domains ; he administered the Imperial lands of his district. The institution of monarchy was essential to all that time.[1] Therefore the religion and the tongue of each little court

[1] A little local king of Winchester and Chichester and the Isle of Wight is addressed by a contemporary Pope in the most solemn fashion as a mighty Monarch. Yet Popes had experience of Western Government upon every scale.

was rapidly impressed upon all its district. We may conclude that on the East and South coasts the Christian religion hardly survived A.D. 500. Certainly the bishoprics did not. Where the dividing line lay between Christian survival and pagan relapse we cannot say. It was certainly well east of the Severn and well west of the Chilterns. But we do not know what proportion of baptized men remained in the centre of the island. We know that its *kings* were pagan, and that the whole eastern and central mass had lost the art of writing; and we may be fairly certain that, at any rate in the southern and eastern belt (the Winchester kingship, those of Sussex, Kent, Essex, East Anglia, the plain of York, and the Durham and Northumbrian coast), the mass of the population had fallen back to be pagan, like their rulers.

Probably when the decline of society began only a minority were Christian. We know, for instance, that St. Germanus baptized great numbers. It is to be presumed that in the welter before and after A.D. 500, that minority dwindled in Eastern Britain, while in the West it gradually expanded.

Devonshire was almost certainly still Christian. Dorset doubtfully so. Somerset probably; much of Wiltshire probably; and certainly Gloucester and all its district; as also Bath, and even the Cotswolds.

Now the great division of the time—not only in Britain but everywhere—was the division between Christian and pagan. Difference of race was not the preoccupation of that age, still less difference of popular dialect. It was as Christians or as heathens that groups of men were distinguished, not by language.

We have, then, this main fact of a mass of petty kings, and their main division into debased Christian (and partly civilized) districts, and pagan wholly barbaric courts and districts, roughly western and eastern, with a larger doubtful belt in between.

But there are other cross-divisions. The courts of the South and East and part (at least) of the Eastern Midlands talked in local *Germanic* dialects.

We have seen what this word "Germanic" means. It means a tangle of original barbaric words and degraded civilized Mediterranean words—Greek and Latin—making up the jargons of that barbarian belt on the edge of the Empire which had become so permeated with Roman things. Thus, words like *shield, war, say, road, rider, ship, book, wold* or *weald*, and a host of others certainly all came from the Roman Empire, while words like *king, sword, horse*, were probably original barbarian sounds. All these *Germanic* dialects were called in common (hundreds of years later) "Anglo-Saxon," because—much later—most of the little kings whose courts spoke thus claimed to come (some of them mythically) from ancestors who were *Angles* (in the neck of the peninsula of Denmark) or *Saxons* (on the mouths of the Elbe and Weser). The Western courts spoke what we now call—hundreds of years later—"Celtic" dialects: a mixture of original native words and Latin and Greek words, from which descend to-day the North and South Welsh languages and Gaelic and Irish and Breton.

As with the religion, so with the dialects, we do not know where the dividing belt lay, nor how wide it was nor what mixture of tongues was in it. There may have been many "Celtic" speaking subjects even under the extreme Eastern courts of Bamborough and Canterbury, but it is unlikely. It is probable that by 597 much the most of those living on the eastern coast of England had come to talk the "Germanic" mixture like their courts and kings. It is likely—from later evidence, even as late as the eighth and ninth centuries—that the Midlands (Oxford, for instance) were of both sorts of speech.

So here we have Christian courts and pagan courts, most of the latter speaking "Germanic" dialects, and most of the former "Celtic" dialects, but undoubtedly many "Celtic

speaking " pagan subjects in the belt between, and possibly a few Christian " Germanic-speaking " people there too.

These divisions of tongue and religion, though by no means exactly corresponding to, yet have a sort of rough connection with, the original organization of Britain on the one hand, and the North Sea pirate kings or Roman-appointed guardians of the coast on the other. But the next point cuts right across them. It is this. Among the original pagan kinglets some were certainly native British who undertook the government of eastern and southern districts during the period of confusion, 410-500. The descendants of the eastern, pagan kinglets at Winchester, Chichester, Canterbury, York, and Bamborough, etc., had, nearly all, by the year 800 or so, come to pride themselves on a sacred descent from a half-mythical ancestor called " Woden." Some of the ruling families did probably descend from some such hero of the Germanic continent or Danish islands, but certainly not all. For when we examine the legendary and the historical names of the founders of pagan families, we find that many of them are not Germanic at all. " Penda " of the Midlands is not Germanic ; nor is " Ina ; " nor is " Ælla " (in the North and again in Sussex) ; nor is " Ceawlin " of Winchester ; nor his legendary ancestors " Cerdic " and " Cynric "—these are pure " Celtic." There was clearly a mixture ; some of the pagan kinglets of the east and centre were descended from auxiliary Germanic chiefs, either originally settled by the Empire to guard the " Saxon Shore," or later hired to fight in Britain against the Scotch raiders ; some descended from local magnates of Britain who, on the breakdown of the Central Roman Government, took over the administration of their districts. It is noteworthy that really German names, such as Ethelbert, are at first to be found right on the east coast, and Celtic—or, at any rate, not Germanic—names inland : at Winchester, for instance, and in the Thames and Trent valleys.

Lastly, the whole question is dominated by a strong legend *both* in the west *and* in the east—therefore credible—that armed bands had arrived in the past from over the North Sea, and that their leaders had established governments on the east coast. Even if we had no other evidence, these legends are good ground for thinking that something of this kind helped on the change between 410 and 597. But, as we shall see, we have other evidence.

Here, then, is the first way of examining the "Gap." We see England as it was in 410. We see it as it was in 597-650. We perceive a change from a declining Roman province to a great number of little districts each under a half-barbarous or wholly barbarous little government; the spread of one kind of barbaric speech in the east, of another in the west; the west at last wholly Christian, though of an isolated and debased type; the east almost all pagan; the centre mixed,[1] and we ask ourselves what other light we can throw on this change.

(II) The Analogy of the Danish Invasions

Our second piece of valuable indirect evidence by which to judge the "Gap" is the later and well-known Danish invasions.

The Scotch raids of 300-450 were raids from the land, and so resembled the continental ones. But Britain is an island, and any raids *from overseas* were (and must have been) of a different kind: less numerous, less frequent, and more hazardous. Now, though we have no account of the fifth-century Saxon pirate raids in detail, we *have* plenty of something very similar in later years—the Danish pirate

[1] For instance, take a map of England and look at the position of Leeds and its district. We have positive documentary evidence that this was Celtic Christian long after 597. Yet its eastern boundary was much nearer the North Sea than the Lancashire coast. On the other hand, shortly after, we know that a Midland district, presumably on the Middle Trent, by Derby, had a pagan chief.

raids of the ninth and tenth centuries. There we see the limits and character of such action, and discover that (1) the numbers were small: a specially large ship held eighty fighting men at the most; (2) there was (naturally) no coming of tribes (however small) as a whole. Some few families might come, but hardly any women, not the mass of slaves, who, of course, formed the bulk of any population. Not cattle of course: the pirates came to loot, not to farm, and who carries a herd of cattle in a shallow open craft of, say, 50 tons? The invading crews were bands of adventurers; (3) the raiders in small compact bodies (from a few hundreds, as a common group, to five or six thousand, on very rare occasions of great effort), would march rapidly far inland and retreat again as rapidly to their camp after gathering spoil; (4) there was little local settlement—not racially significant in a population of several millions;[1] but (5) when the chiefs did remain in the island they seized political power, for it meant revenue. The greater part, naturally, went home with their booty. But such few as remained tried to take over local government, with its tax-revenue and public lands; (6) but they did not and could not destroy towns. (7) The cruelty of these visitations produced an immense effect on contemporaries, quite out of proportion to the numbers involved, e.g. in the late ninth century we have a flamboyant contemporary description of the defeat of these dreaded pirates off the Wight. We would imagine we were dealing with a vast host until we learn, by a chance allusion, that the total number of the enemy was three ships—less than 250 men! There is a similar epic account of a crushing of pirates in contemporary France—but it turns out the whole enemy force can take refuge in one small village church. A larger

[1] We have one allusion, from 250 to 300 years later, to a small deserted continental district in the neck of the Danish peninsula, where the memory of a sixth-century migration was still said to remain. But it is the only case; and it is self-evident that immigration on a large scale could not be possible with the primitive means available.

body is called "countless"—but cannot besiege a circumference of 3000 yards. (8) Since those few leaders who did remain and settle with their guards and followers had gain for their object and the seizing of revenue from taxes and land, they often kill kings and leading men, but rarely attempt a general massacre, which would only have made them lose, and which, directed against the slaves who formed the bulk of the population, would have been a mere destruction of the wealth they had come to obtain.

The Danish invasions, then, of the eighth and ninth centuries are stamped with these characteristics, and we have them on the evidence of documentary and contemporary records.

Such records are an excellent guide to what really happened in the earlier and similar pirate invasions of the Saxons and Angles and Frisians in the fifth or sixth centuries. There were the same small numbers, the same horror of the raiders, the same return of the bulk of them to their homes, the same settlement of a few who seize, in some restricted places, upon the local government, and there gather revenue and establish a little local court. But you have also in the case of the earlier pirate raids around A.D. 500 the presence of governing men of the pirates' own race already settled on the coasts by the Roman Imperial power for more than a century and a half. These would naturally welcome their fellows and coalesce with them, making the setting up of local governments easy.

We are now in a position to supplement our two main forms of indirect evidence—the contrast between England in 410 and England in 597-650, and the known parallel of the Danish invasions—by our third form of evidence, actual record. It is most scanty. In all normal history documentary record is the chief, often the only, basis; but in the "Gap" it is the least factor. Such as it is, it can be set down in a few sentences.

(III) Documents

Document I (The "Life of St. Germanus"[1]) shows us two things only, and of these one is but negative. These two things are: (1) that Britain in 429, the date of St. Germanus' first visit, suffered from a raid of Saxons and Scotch combined. That is what one would expect. It was normal to the time. It was not a large band, for it was defeated in a narrow valley and cut to pieces at one river ford. The battle is known as the "Hallelujah Victory," from the war cry set by St. Germanus, who led the citizens on that occasion: (2) as late as A.D. 447 (the date of the second visit) Britain was still a regular part of the civilized Roman world. St. Germanus comes again in that year, and there is no hint of any foreign invasion in force, still less of a "conquest." Moreover, the document itself is written after St. Germanus' death (which took place in 448). It is written some years after, and yet shows no knowledge of any such conquest: and that is conclusive.

Document II (the "Liber Querulus" of St. Gildas, a Briton of the West). This is undated, but we can fix its date within certain limits. He wrote (probably abroad, in Brittany) not earlier than 546 nor later than 560. He was born not earlier than 493 nor later than 516. His statement of things earlier than his own birth is very confused but, in its largest lines, can be trusted, for he must have obtained his general impression from his elders, and some old men still living when he wrote could remember the generation which had seen the worst pirate raids.

What Gildas tells us is that in the third consulship of "Ætius" (which may mean Agitius, A.D. 447) there were bad raids over the Scottish border which made the citizens appeal for aid from the Continent. None could be sent. *Later* (unfortunately he gives us no date) a "King of Britain," which may mean either an over-king or a local kinglet,

[1] The life, as we have seen, is conjectured to date from about A.D. 480.

hires a small guard of mercenaries from beyond the North Sea (only three shiploads, say 200 men), presumably as a bodyguard in his campaigns against the successive raids of Scotsmen—that is exactly what Roman government, large and small, did everywhere. These mercenaries rebel and loot. They summon others of their kind from oversea, and start plundering marches across the island, even reaching the western sea in places. These looting expeditions are described in the common church rhetoric of the time. There are " columns overthrown," there are " crackling flames," blood, all the rest of it. A " miserable remnant " are left. It is what we have in all the rhetorical writing of the day, and we know how to discount it, for it is written with the avowed purpose of appalling the reader with the Judgments of Heaven. But it is clear that the disturbance caused by these raiding marches was serious. How long they lasted Gildas does not say, but obviously only a short time, for the robbers retire with their booty, though they leave some of their number in the island : presumably in settlements upon the eastern and southern coasts. Against this remainder the citizens are led by a leader called Ambrosius Aurelianus, a Roman name, and after some fluctuation in the fighting, are crushed in the " Battle of Mount Badon," a hill of which we do not know the site.[1] Since that date—about 500 to 516—there has been no attack from the revolted auxiliaries and their overseas allies, but a peace only troubled by the local wars between native chieftains—and that long peace, with no more pirate raids, takes us down to within fifty years of the end of the " Gap."

Such is the brief and obscure account. It is clear from

[1] There is a guess at Badbury Rings, the fortified hill in Dorset north of Poole. It is only a guess, but the most probable, for (1) the name fits in well, and there is no other likely one of the kind remaining ; (2) the site is probable, for it is a very definitely marked and conspicuous isolated " Mons " (Gildas says " Mons Badonicus "), and it is near the sea coast from which pirates would come, and depended on entrenchment like the sites of so many other early battles, Cæsar's at Bigberry Hill, Alfred's above Eddington, etc.

Gildas' phrasing that we have in him confirmation of our conclusion from other sources. *Some* of the auxiliary leaders who had thus raided remained in the island, and, as is clear from what followed, on the east and south coasts. There they certainly found large settlements of their kin descended from the earlier Germanic auxiliaries of the later Empire—especially on the "Saxon Shore," which was named after these Imperial settlements—and there they founded, as we know, little courts, each with its kinglet, as at Canterbury near to, and Bamborough on, the sea; or they mixed with the other *native* local kinglets close by, as (to judge by the traditional names of the earliest kings) at Winchester and possibly Chichester. Gildas clearly regards these eastern leaders as pagans, which, indeed, we know them to be when history begins again (after the landing of St. Augustine) in the seventh century. Further, Gildas' book shows a violent antipathy in his time (say 550) between men of his debased Christian culture in the West and the heathen men of whatever origin to the East.

Beyond these things Gildas tells us nothing, and our direct testimony ends.

Summary

What Happened in the "Gap"

After reviewing all the evidence :—

(1) The "two ends" *up to* 410 and *after* 597 *onwards*,
(2) The analogy of the Danish invasions,
(3) The slight direct evidence of—
    (*a*) The "Life of St. Germanus,"
    (*b*) Gildas,

we may sum up the story of England in the submerged two centuries (fifth and sixth, 400-600) as follows :—

England still had skeleton Roman garrisons and depots left in A.D. 410. But from that date they were never

reinforced, and therefore they dwindled and lost their discipline. Raids of Irish pirates (their conversion to Catholic civilization was not yet complete), of Scotch landsmen and pirates, of pirates from the North Sea (Dutch, Danish, Frisian, and German, called in general "Saxon" or "Angle," with a few "Jutes," probably from Holstein), had been common for nearly 200 years (since before 260), and continued after 440. And there was one particularly severe raid, somewhere between 450 and 460. Though the number of the raiders was small, they had great effect—(1) because the mass of civilized society was then made up of slaves, and the remaining freemen, or "citizens," were unused to arms; (2) these few were so very much richer than the rest that there was a wide indifference to anything but personal safety, so that the loot of a few rich houses, or the chief raider's alliance with their owners, had a profound effect; (3) the pirates found already settled along the coast by Roman authority a belt of settlers from their own country, called "Saxons." These disorders had a cumulative result, continuing as they did for an active lifetime, say 450-500. They shook and dissolved society. Popular habits took the place of polite and official habits. Local dialects, Celtic and Teutonic, became the speech of all; and the official Latin of the province died out. The local popular dialects were Welsh in the West, that is, a mixture of original Celtic and Latin; on the East coast probably already largely "Germanic," that is, a mixture of original German, barbaric words, with numerous degraded civilized words.

In this lifetime of 450 to (say) 500, as the arts and communications declined, each district became led and administrated by its most important family.

The Roman tradition of *Monarchy* as a sacred and necessary thing had so affected the whole world that these petty leaders of a county or a couple of counties at the most—often a town and its neighbourhood only—were called Kings, had regular little courts, and administered public

lands and permanently affected their subjects by the spread, locally, of the court language. They acted in miniature as the Roman Imperial power had acted, taxing, judging, granting land, etc. The land units of *villa*, Imperial domain, etc., were unchanged, as were the labour of the slaves in the fields, the boundaries of estates, the inhabited sites of villages, their shrines, the methods of agriculture, and all the framework of life. But there was a welter of petty, weak, and declining local governments. In this welter the Catholic Church (far less numerous here, on the extreme edge, than in the central parts of the Empire) began to die out in many places, especially in the east and north-east, where the raids were thickest.

At some unknown date, but earlier than 500, and probably later, but not much later, than 449, say, 450-460 or so, some harassed local ruler in the anarchy—probably a kinglet of Kent—resumed the old Roman policy of hiring auxiliaries. The available field for recruiting these was the eastern border of the Empire (beyond the Rhine and up to Denmark) where many men had trained in the Roman armies and navies, where Roman shipping had long been copied, where Roman wealth was coveted, and where civilized habits were familiar to all by repute and to many by experience. These auxiliaries were few in numbers, but trained; they found men of their own speech long settled on the coast (the Saxon Shore) from the Wash to Southampton Water. After some successful service at a wage, they took to looting, and, with others of their own kind from over the sea, attacked not only the south and east, but the north-east as well, between the Forth and the Wash. They broke into raids of many days march from the coast, killing and plundering. After the first shock there was a rally. A kinglet, possibly from the west (because there the raids, through exhaustion, had had less effect), collected a sufficient force from that long disarmed and slave-owning society of Roman citizens to crush the main body of the raiders. He

bore the Roman name of Ambrose Aurelian. Another kinglet, almost certainly from Somerset, who became a legend, also destroyed the raiders—perhaps those of the more southern belt. His Roman name, Artorius, has survived as Arthur.

All this was over round about 500 or a little later, and a long peace followed, save for the quarrels of neighbouring kinglets.

But society had been sinking the whole time, and Britain, being cut off by these ruinous coastal raids from the mass of Christendom, became everywhere very barbaric. The eastern kinglets, by the end of the century (597), were, or had become, pagan; so were their little courts and probably most of their subjects. The western kinglets were Christian, but after a distorted fashion, having been so long separated from direct communication with Rome. The little courts along the east and south coasts, and presumably most of their subjects, were talking "Germanic" dialects with many Latin and aboriginal British words, and these had spread even to the mass of slaves. Of the central bulk of the island we know nothing save that its bishoprics had disappeared, and many, probably not all, of whatever Christian communities it may have held. All these little kings fought one against the other in petty wars. It was a rapidly accelerating decline into barbarism throughout the island, with but slight chance of any culture spreading from the starved Christian belt of the mountainous west, and little more from the extremely primitive condition of now Christian Ireland, where, however, religion was purer.[1]

But at the end of the century the French missionaries sent by the Pope of Rome began a profound change. Rebuffed by the western Christians, they set out to civilize

[1] But on this one may hesitate. Irish missionary zeal was strong. Irish Monks came—though without effect—to Sussex, and later with great effect to Northumberland and Yorkshire. They *might* in time have reconstructed a sort of civilization.

the pagan east coast. It took them a century (600-700). *As the Faith penetrated inland it took with it the eastern Germanic dialects.* The Celtic faded into the hills. The priests translated every term of Roman government (*Dux*, *Concilium*, etc.) into the court dialects of their first converts (Ealdorman, Witangemot, etc.), and in six generations the old Roman towns and all the fertile, densely inhabited part of the island—that is, all but the mountains—was again a full province of Catholic European Society, participating in all its arts, tending to become one realm, and gradually falling into one similarity of speech—in local dialects—which speech was still spread westward by the Church schools and priests, who at last carried it to the Severn and beyond. With their missions, this group of dialects, called "Anglo-Saxon"—dialects half-Latin in origin, like all Germanic lingoes of the Dark Ages—was spread everywhere, as was the influence of the original little courts on and near the east coast, whence the first renascence of Roman culture had started.

Contemporary Europe during the Eclipse of England

To understand the Recovery of Britain for civilization we must have some detail of what we have hitherto only seen generally—the two centuries A.D. 400-600 on the Continent, when our own history is almost a blank. During these 200 years Roman Society in Western Europe was slowly transformed, as we have seen, till it became wholly *Christian*. The old families of the Roman and provincial nobility were the last to abandon the dead remnants of paganism. This official paganism still had a high official and guardian in Stilicho, the chief general of the west, round the year 400. But by the time Britain was cut off no pagan armed force, or even commanding officer, remained.

In the next place, local government gradually fell, as

we have also seen, to local commanders of the Roman armies, most of them barbarian in origin, with a mixed troop under them, mainly barbaric, and called after the origin of their general.[1]

It took more than a lifetime for this to have full effect. Generals would put up emperors in the west, marry into their families, and yet continue to get more and more independent, each in his own district. They gradually stopped passing on the taxes into the central exchequer above, and these taxes were less and less paid to them from below.

In the middle of the fifth century, less than a generation after Britain had lost direct connection with the central government, there came a decisive thing. The west suffered a murderous shock from the assault of a vast horde of Mongols out of Asia called Huns, and led by a savage called Attila. This horde was swelled by a mass of subject barbarians from without the Empire, Germans and Slavs, and, at its worst, got right into Gaul. The Roman generals, Theodoric and Ætius, were strong enough to beat it in the plains of Champagne, but the whole structure of society was loosened : it never afterwards recovered its old compact uniformity.

Before the end of the fifth century (A.D. 500) the west gradually ceased to have one acting central government in the details of administration.

Its social unity remained. All freemen were still for many generations citizens of the Empire, not of local states. The officials, clerical and lay, passed continually from city to city over the postal systems of the great Imperial roads : the bishops joined councils, public and private letters

[1] Thus Alaric was a Goth by descent, and of the royal blood of the Goths. By profession and all the circumstances of his life he was a Roman general commanding a small Roman auxiliary force of about 20,000 men. That force, though it was made up of every kind of man drawn from all manner of recruitment, was called the " Goths," after its original formation, though it had long ceased to be specially Gothic.

circulated over them everywhere. The universal coinage was that of the Empire, and stamped with the effigy of the ruler of the world at Constantinople. But provincial centres, each with some local general (usually a barbarian auxiliary) at its head, had taken over the law courts and the offices of taxation and administration. Palace-intrigue—at a time when civilians had been trained for generations to an unarmed civilian life under an absolute government (not unlike our modern police-governments in its unquestioned power)—helped the change.

It was such a palace-intrigue, for instance, which summoned a large band [1] of German and Slav auxiliaries, called collectively "Vandals," into North Africa. It was a great Imperial noble and court official of the Empire who was responsible for their coming into that province; but when they had overrun it their commander set up an independent piratical court at Carthage which lasted nearly ninety years before it was put down and wholly destroyed by the armies of the Empire.

After 476 no Western Emperor was nominated. The Imperial name and authority were focussed entirely in Constantinople, and the Emperor there ruling was henceforward the sole head of the civilized world. But he had ceased to have direct power over the west; and though documents were dated in his name and by his years, though the currency was still struck in his image, yet the chieftains of the western garrisons grew more and more independent in fact: naming the succession of Roman officials, gathering the rapidly diminishing taxes, and administering the laws. They all thought of themselves as part of the Roman Commonwealth, as citizens of the great Empire. Latin was their only tongue in administration and religion. All titles and offices, the whole structure of society remained entirely Roman. Nothing had gone save the gathering up

[1] It had with it the families of the soldiers, but its fighting effectives were less than what we should call to-day a couple of divisions.

of all western administration into the one centre of Rome. Nothing had changed save the gradual substitution of these local courts under the generals of an army grown barbaric for the old central government.

Of the generals now intriguing round, not for, the throne, the Emperor recognized one in Italy—Odoacer: he ruled so independently that another, Theodoric, a Goth by descent but wholly formed by the Imperial court and entirely of its tradition and atmosphere, was sent to oust him. But communications had become too difficult and society too loose for a successor to provide a remedy. Theodoric inevitably took by degrees the same half-independent position as Odoacer had held, and only after his death did the Emperor, at the expense of a heavy series of campaigns, recover direct power over Italy: nor did he hold it long. In the north yet another body of auxiliary troops, the Lombards, were led by their general, Alboin (who, like his father before him, held the Emperor's commission), from the barren mountain land where they were quartered, down into the warmth and wealth of the plains. He took over the government of the valley of the Po and the Northern Apennines, with a great train of followers; fixing his centre at Pavia and leaving only Rome and the south to the direct control of Constantinople. In Gaul, in Spain (save in the Andalusian South), it was the same. Local government fell to local generals of auxiliaries. Their descendants, in a generation or two, became ruling houses, which *very gradually* came to feel that certain definite provinces were their "inheritance": that is, that they had a right to the tax-income arising from them. It was much later that definite boundaries existed between one such "kingdom" and another.

It was an extremely slow process. At first one general would fight another in a sort of civil war, the successful one extending the area of his government, and perhaps leaving it divided among his sons. But in the absence of one lay

head, lay government became at last identified with the local courts, and the overlordship of the Emperor at Constantinople, always taken for granted, grew more and more shadowy. Not long after A.D. 600 coins are struck by the local "kings" of the West in their own effigy. In less than two centuries more—by A.D. 800—the last vestige of Constantinople's power over the West was swept aside, and an Independent Western *Empire* was declared under Charlemagne. All this while, it must be remembered, the Empire survived. If we miss that prime truth we miss everything.

The Roman Empire no more "fell" or "ceased" in the West at any particular date than a country family "falls" or "ceases" when the sons have rooms in London.

The Empire of which Charlemagne, as late as A.D. 800, called himself Emperor was still the Roman Empire in men's minds: reunited in the West after a long space of quasi-independent local rulers, in Gaul, Italy, Spain.

I have said above that the failure of Central Government was *lay*. "In the absence of a *lay* head, *lay* government in the West became at last identified with the local courts." (At Paris, at Toledo, at Pavia.) But lay government and lay affairs were the least important concern of these generations. The great business in which all were absorbed was the prodigious Revolution in *Religion*.

The Church had won, and all the West, or very nearly all (all save here and there some small military force, or here and there some knot of old wealthy families), had lost the pagan habit.

Unfortunately this new unity was not complete. The Catholic Church was ubiquitous, and its strict disciplined organization under bishops, grouped in the West under the central western Patriarchate of Rome, was the framework of society. But the Roman Army, which was the cement of that society and the transformation of which had led to the administrative change, to the local governments becoming more and more independent under their barbaric auxiliary

generals, stood, in the mass, outside the rest of the citizens, because the barbaric auxiliaries were as a whole *Arian*. We have already seen how the lower elements in Roman society and particularly the German and Slav (and occasionally Mongol) mercenaries were led into this backwater.

The great rationalist heresy had been governing the court, at the moment when the transformation of government had taken place, and the local generals and their commands had taken on the traditions of that heresy : its whole frame of mind, its anti-social, anti-catholic isolation. They and their officers (and most perhaps of their earlier troops) were in this mood and practice, half-denying Christ as God, and in a mood at issue with the world. This mood had become hereditary with them. Theodoric in Italy, the Vandal leaders and their men in Africa, the court of Toulouse —later of Toledo—were Arian ; they were out of communion with the millions around, and therefore these millions were spiritually hostile.

Had such a state of affairs endured, it is clear what the end would have been. Constantinople and its Emperor, now Catholic again, would have regained the West through the overwhelming pressure of numbers, and the gradual effect of civilization re-absorbing its inferiors and subjects, and of a supreme arbiter deciding between the Catholic populations and their Arian rulers. But before such a slow process could get to work an accident diverted it, and further accentuated the separateness of all on this side of the Adriatic.

That strain was resolved by a decisive disruption. Gaul stepped into power : and from Paris and Northern France began to radiate those influences which fixed the institutions of the West.

There lay in Belgium a small but excellent auxiliary troop composed of Frankish recruitment under an hereditary chief. They guarded the Lower Rhine against their fellows, and had the wardenship of Roman land upon those

Northern Marches. But those against whom they stood intermingled closely with them; they were both of one stock, speaking the same low-Dutch mixture of Teutonic and Latin which the Flemings speak to-day. Thus of a king's two sons one followed Attila against the Empire; another, "Merobaudes" or "Merovechus," held a Roman commission, was married to a Roman wife, and fought against Attila side by side with the chief Roman general Ætius, in the battle which saved Christendom. He had a son Childeric, who acted in a similar post as general commanding a Frankish auxiliary troop which worked under the Roman command of Agitius, the son of Ætius. Tournai was Childeric's capital or garrison, and his local government reached the Somme. He was a Roman in accoutrement and habit, and his tomb is wholly Roman. He was pagan. Childeric's son, Clovis, inherited the same command; in one of the civil wars, defeated his colleague Syagrius (the son of Agitius), and extended his local government down to the Loire. Clovis also was a pagan, as were the bulk of, or all, his little corps.[1] It was late for any general of the Roman forces to be pagan, but Clovis' command lay in the extreme north, and was less open to the influences of the general civilization.

This accession of Clovis to government over Northern Gaul, the sowing of the seed whence sprang the mighty French monarchy, was contemporary with the darkest moment of the eclipse of Britain: 480-490.

Now Clovis' paganism was an accident of great effect. Nearly all the other local commanders with their governments were Arian—Arianism was the tone of the armed forces behind the local governments at Toulouse, at Pavia, at Carthage. Clovis freshly converted, and with no tradition of the former Arian Byzantine court behind him, naturally was baptized a *Catholic* by the Bishop of Rheims. From

[1] Apparently about, or less than, 8000 men at the most.

that moment he, and he alone, had behind him the whole force of society.

A Catholic ruler was the enthusiastically accepted head of all those Catholic millions and of the Catholic civil officials, the Catholic hierarchy, from the Garonne to the Meuse.

He was able to drive out the Arian government of Toulouse, and thus to unite nearly all Gaul; he and his sons overshadowed Italy and Spain; he and his descendants erected a separate and Catholic power second only to the Papacy in its control over the West, and the subordinate and support of the Papacy. When the Mohammedan tide, a century later, overwhelmed Christian Spain, Catholic Gaul grew still more important. Its example had already converted the Arian king at Toledo and the Arian king at Pavia. Further, Catholic Gaul began to conquer (and evangelize) the half-barbarian belt beyond the Rhine. The influence of Northern France, the heir of Roman tradition, extended far into the German forests. The lower valley of the Main, long influenced by civilization, now became Catholic, and the new power had its belt of German-speaking Christians whence, later, it was to advance right up to the Elbe with great armies drawn in the mass from France.

For another characteristic of the New Time was the vast recruitment available to the King of Paris for his armed forces.

The legionary organization of the Roman armies, long in decay, had disappeared. Its place had been taken by the more primitive method of a general levy. Every free man was subject to a summons, and might be called out for a military expedition. Of course, the whole free population was never so summoned, but all were liable, and the new rulers of Gaul could raise immense hosts even by selecting only a part of the territory from which to collect an army. Such forces would not be kept long in the field at any one time, but their weight was prodigious compared with anything the German heathen tribes could bring against them,

and made all thought of reassertion of power from Constantinople impossible.

These great hosts, drawn from the dense population of France, were the dominating factor in Western Europe of all the early Dark Ages.

It was in these conditions of Western Europe that the chief Bishopric at Rome, the sole Patriarchate of the West and admitted head of the whole Catholic Church, not only in the Occident, including Africa, but also, less directly, of the East, came into the hands of one of the greatest of our race—St. Gregory the First.

He was of the generation after Clovis, born before the middle of the sixth century some thirty years after that general's death. He acted throughout the whole West, giving a direction from the Holy See to the Latin-speaking society, which now reached from the Channel to the Sahara and from the Vosges and Alps to the Atlantic. He had been made Prætor of Rome by the Emperor Justin ; later special envoy to Byzantium : he was acclaimed Pope in A.D. 590.

It was part of such a man's position at such a moment to attempt a complete reuniting of the Latin world by the recovery of Britain. Already, before his elevation, he had noticed slaves captured from the heathen eastern half of the island and exposed for sale in Rome. In the seventh year of his pontificate he sent a French monk—Augustine of Autun, head of the Roman Benedictine house upon the Cœlian Hill—with certain companions to evangelize and restore the lost lands beyond the Channel. He was to re-establish the old order, with a Metropolitan of the south of the island in its principal town of London, another at York for the north, each with his suffragans, and he was to have jurisdiction over all the native bishops and long-abandoned Christians of the distant west as well as over the converts he should make in the nearer heathen east.

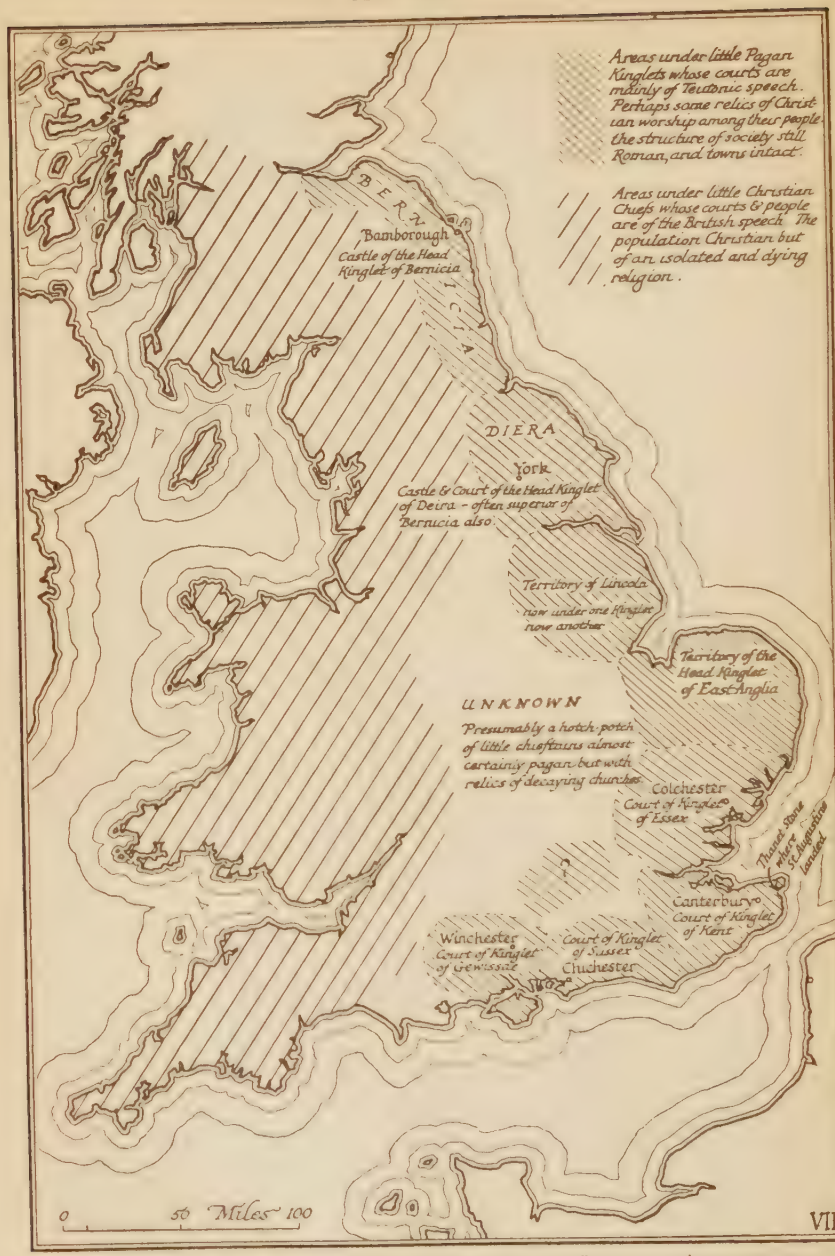
It was on such a mission that St. Augustine of Autun crossed the straits of Dover, early (perhaps about Easter) in the year A.D. 597.

II

The Recovery of Britain

A.D. 597–A.D. 757

160 Years


Areas under little Pagan Kinglets whose courts are mainly of Teutonic speech. Perhaps some relics of Christian worship among their people the structure of society still Roman, and towns intact.
Areas under little Christian Chiefs whose courts & people are of the British speech. The population Christian but of an isolated and dying religion.
BERNICIA
Bamborough
Castle of the Head Kinglet of Bernicia
DIERA
York
Castle & Court of the Head Kinglet of Deira - often superior of Bernicia also
Territory of Lincoln now under one Kinglet now another
Territory of the Head Kinglet of East Anglia
UNKNOWN
Presumably a hotch-potch of little chieftains almost certainly pagan but with relics of decaying churches
Colchester
Court of Kinglet of Essex
Thanet, Some where St Augustine landed
Canterbury
Court of Kinglet of Kent
Winchester
Court of Kinglet of Gewissæ
Court of Kinglet of Sussex
Chichester
0
50 Miles 100
VII.

ENGLAND AT THE END OF THE "GAP" BEFORE THE CATHOLIC ADVANCE BEGAN, A.D. 590-600

II

THE RECOVERY OF BRITAIN

(A.D. 597–A.D. 757—160 Years)

LET me summarize and repeat the state of England in 597. We have seen how England had fallen in two centuries of isolation, raids, and domestic fighting from a civilized Roman province to a barbarous heap of tiny wrangling kingships—fifty or more—half of them trampled back into a now savage heathenism, half in a declining and warped Christian tradition, and all cut off from Europe.

It was recovered and restored to civilization by the organized might of the Catholic Church, at that time the directing force of European society, as is Finance to-day.

After 160 years of that effort England appears again, not indeed yet as one realm, but at least as one chief province of Christendom with all the full institutions of its time: the traditional learning of the Latin world, the official use of the Latin tongue, exact bishoprics in an ordered hierarchy dependent on Rome, great monastic foundations, councils deliberating on policy and laws—the whole apparatus of Western Culture. The Welsh mountains alone remained in isolation; the rest, from the Scotch borders to the channel had become of one type, speaking for the most part that set of eastern dialects, half-German, half-Latin—which the first missionaries had found in the little courts of Kent and Essex and Bamborough. These dialects had spread more and more westward under the influence of the clergy and their schools, and under the effect

of the new fully Catholic civilization, which was strengthening the eastern side of Britain, the base from which it worked. After another century or two, all the settled land and most habitable, even to the Exe and well over Severn, was talking the various mixtures of German and Latin words to which we to-day give the vague general term "Anglo-Saxon."

Already, by the end of the recovery, by 757, there was felt a certain national unity, and in little more than another century on—by Alfred's lifetime (849-900)—men had begun to think again of a single Britain.

So thoroughly was this recovery of civilization effected by the Church, under the impulse of the Papacy, that when the *second* set of raids struck the island—the Danish invasions—the storm, though severe, was weathered; and England, now a nation, survived.

This great edifice might have been completed in one short generation of missionary work had it not been for a great blunder—a catastrophe—which checked its outset and deflected the whole history of England. The western, Christian, half of the island had fallen so low through long isolation that its kinglets and bishops would not re-enter the unity of Europe. They refused to work with the main effort of Rome.

Rome had not allowed for this rebuff: its whole plan for recovering England had to be remodelled.

Two results followed. *First*, the heathen east coast had to be approached by the Roman missionaries without local knowledge and without aid from within the island, so that England's recovery—her conversion and re-education in writing, reading, the keeping of accounts, record, building, and (above all) a knowledge of the Latin tongue—was a slow business, subject to continual set-backs. It was not fully achieved till three generations had passed.

Next—of incalculable effect upon the English story—this re-education of England, which might have come from the Celtic west and Rome combined, had to be conducted

from the courts of the little *Eastern* kings alone ; whereas it should more naturally have proceeded from the courts of the *Western*. It had to come from Canterbury and Colchester and the rest, instead of working in combination with the remaining Bishoprics. The local dialects of the eastern heathen kinglets, German and Latin mixed, were those to which the Roman missionary effort was reduced for the spreading of culture among the barbarous. The missionaries of civilization were thrown back upon, compelled to repose on, and to spread from, the Kentish chieftain's town of Canterbury ; later, the eastern centres of Dunwich, Bamborough, and Whitby—all the North Sea coast. The west, though still Christian after its half-barbarous fashion (having the Mass, and with it some tradition of Latin), became the enemy of the Church. The east, though originally heathen, became the home of the Church in this island, and the Church meant vigorous civilization amidst a welter of paganism on the one hand, and a hopeless remnant of withered Welsh tradition on the other.

Therefore our Christian culture expressed itself, henceforward, in the eastern dialects. The clergy, as they restored to civilized life these degraded heathens, translated the terms of Roman living, as we have seen, into the language of their pupils : a *Concilium* became a *Witan ;* a *Dux* (or *Comes*) an *Ealdorman ;* a bishop's *sedes* his *stool* (Cathedra) ; even the evangel they turned into "gospel." As they fostered and revived the remains of the old Latin order in England, they gave it a dress suitable to the titles and traditions of the petty courts on the North Sea and its rivers. The western half of the island dwindled before this advance of the Church from the east. The Celtic dialects shrank back, in the slow process of 400 years, to being a local anomaly, confined to the wild country of the Welsh mountains, with their few hundred thousands of tribal men, and to the distant extremes of Cornwall beyond Exe.

A grievous loss following on this revolution was the

failure of *record* in the west. The Church, working from the east coast and in touch with Europe, established proper "Chronicles," and we have, from that root, a fairly consecutive history made up of lives, chronicles, laws, and charters, beginning in each spot with its final conversion to Catholicism and preserved in Latin by competent writers. Quite early in the affair (round about 700) the east has a regular historian in the venerable Bede; but in the west we have legends only, wilder and wilder as time goes on, no basis for history, full of wonders and magicians: beyond these only very late "annals" and doubtful genealogies of mountain kings. *The consequence is that all true record of the Midland mass of England is lost.* We know in detail the eastern kings from the period 597-626, and their advance as the culture of the Catholic Church strengthens them. But of the western kings—the last heirs of the old civilization, possessed of the Mass and even of some echo of the Classics—we know less and less. Of what went on in the bulk of England—the upper Thames Valley, the main part of the Trent Basin, the Pennines, half Hampshire, Dorset, Wilts, and all the rest—we know nothing certain till they slowly reappear after a silence of nearly 300 years under the clerical organization advancing from the east coast. We have echoes of kings with Celtic names, but lapsed into heathendom, and their descendants later claiming descent from Woden. We see courts with names like "South Saxon," or "Middle Engle," but learn nothing of their populace. We see other names like "Chilternsætas," "Hwiccas," "Gewissæ," emerging; but we have no clue to their origin and character. And this great loss to history all turns on the provincial perversity of those western Christian Englishmen who refused reunion with Europe and the Papacy at St. Augustine's bidding in 603.

The period of the Recovery falls into three divisions :—

(*a*) The first effort of *seven* years, 597-604, which is checked by the final refusal of the Christians in the west to help in civilizing the pagans of the east of England.

(*b*) The slow and at first doubtful adventure of Catholic and Roman civilization finally re-establishing itself on the east coast, and as it does so gradually but heavily increasing the power of the eastern courts against the west. This division is *sixty* years in length, and ends with the Council of Whitby in 664. For that council decided the fully Roman character of the new Bishoprics and ritual as against the Irish.

(*c*) The continued expansion, after this conversion and settlement, of the new and full Catholic culture over all the island up to the Highland border and the Welsh hills, carrying with it the various eastern (Anglo-Saxon) dialects and the political power of the eastern kinglets. These tend more and more to coalesce from petty and fluctuating divisions into a national group of three main lots (Northern, or *Northumbria ;* Midland or *Mercia ;* and Southern, or *Wessex*), until the ground is prepared for the first chief King, Offa, in 757. At his accession the process of recovery is complete. Britain is fully civilized again (save for the Welsh hills and the Highlands), and makes part of Europe, with flourishing monasteries, regular councils, an organized social life, *and, most important of all, a familiar knowledge and use of the Latin tongue,* in which charters and chronicles and all records can be preserved. It is a final period of *ninety-three* years, 664 to 757.

(A) The First Attempt

(A.D. 597-604—7 Years)

The Pope, Gregory I, sends missionaries to England under St. Augustine

The point upon which the Pope now directed his missionaries was that which had always been the main gate of entry into this island for the civilization of the Continent: the narrow waters of the Straits of Dover. They were to come, as Cæsar had come, and the Generals of Claudius, by that corner of land which has, from the beginning of all history, borne the name of Kent.

Kent and its king

Kent had at that time a petty kinglet of its own called Ethelbert. It was important to approach him for three good reasons. (1) He was at the entry to the country, and his ports provided communication with Christendom; (2) *he was married to a Christian of the great reigning house of Paris, a princess who had brought the Faith to his court, kept there a bishop from her own country, and had made all familiar with the Mass;* (3) he was for the moment that one of the little heathen rulers on the eastern and southern coast who occupied a sort of vague primacy; such titular leadership among them was called in their jargon "Bretwalda." [1]

and French Queen

Of these three reasons the second was by far the most important. The Queen of Kent was a daughter of that vastly important House of Clovis which, as we have just seen, was the champion of the Catholic Church in Western Europe, which had destroyed the heretic courts in Southern

[1] In the first centuries of the Dark Ages so much memory of the Roman province remained that the most important of the little eastern kings would sometimes call himself by the vague title of "Wealder of Britain," and receive national support in this claim from the others, though, of course, there was no real power. Ethelbert was one of these. It was a tradition drawn from the Roman past and probably a continuation of the *Dux Britanniarum*.

Gaul, and now ruled over nearly all France, having for the instrument of its power new, very large, short-service armies. This court of Paris, the main thing in Christendom, had been now for a century the master power in the West, and the presence of one of its women at Canterbury, with a French bishop at her side, meant that all the little Canterbury court was suburban to Christian France, close at hand.

The acceptance of the Faith *here* was therefore little more than a form, though the missionaries noted the kinglet's dread of spells, and impressed him with their fine silver cross, their hymns, and their banner with its effigy of Our Lord. A surviving Roman Church (dedicated to St. Martin, the great saint of Gaul), wherein presumably the Queen and the Catholics of the place heard their Mass, was given to the newcomers, and they had leave to use the churches of Kent still remaining, to repair them, and to build others when needful. In less than three months—by Pentecost, 597—the King was baptized. Monarchy being then everywhere, through the Roman tradition—even on the smallest scale—the deciding institution in each society, the King's baptism meant the beginning of civilization. Individual conversions, or the strengthening of any Christian remnant, would have had no such result.

The Court of Kent accepts baptism and civilization, A.D. 597

Augustine returned to France, was consecrated bishop, and then came back to Kent, still consulting the Pope on all transactions.

Four years later—in 601—the Pope sent three other missioners—Justin, Mellitus, and Paulinus (Italians)—to help the effort at recovering Britain. They brought the *Pallium*,[1] or Pall, for Augustine, and a papal ordinance for the Church organization of Britain. Gregory's scheme for this threw some light on the organization of the Church

The Pope appoints St. Augustine Archbishop

[1] The Pallium was the symbol of acknowledgment as Archbishop by the Pope: a stole of wool from Rome. It was worn in unbroken succession till the final destruction of the Catholic Church in England under Elizabeth. The last Archbishop to wear it was Pole.

which had probably been in Britain while the Empire still maintained an active bureaucracy in the island, for evidently the Pope had the old scheme before him when he prepared, as we have seen, a Metropolitan at London for the south, another at York for the north, and twelve suffragans under each.

His scheme of an English hierarchy

The scheme could have been imposed, and the recovery of Britain for Europe immediately accomplished, but for that perverse human accident—spontaneous, passionate, and breaking all the good plans of intelligence—the Welsh schism. Such accidents have always marked the baffling story of Christian Europe, and made it a series of arduous actions against odds. The Christian half of the island unaccountably—or rather unexpectedly—rebelled: its leaders preferred a blind emotion to their reasoned duty as the heirs, however remote, of civilization.

The Welsh schism

The story of the schism is preserved. When St. Augustine appealed to the Christian West to help in the work of conversion, that is, to enter the revived scheme of a Roman province, a meeting with the Western bishops was arranged on the borderland between heathen and Christian kinglets, probably on the further edge of the uncertain Midland belt, beyond which the Christian churches were still fairly organized.[1]

The western Christians refuse to enter the European unity at first

The British bishops of this first delegation refused union. In their long isolation they had missed the reform of the Calendar in Europe, and they took their traditional date

[1] The place was still known in the eighth century -150 years later -as "St. Augustine's Oak." There is no authority for putting it at Aust, near the Severn. It was somewhere beyond what, in 730 or so, was the last outpost of the kinglet of Winchester, between that and those whom the Saxons called, later, "Hwiccas"; we find *much later* that name attached to part of Warwickshire, Gloucester, and Wilts and Worcester, but in 600 the words "boundaries of the Huiccas" may mean a spot east of all that. For we must always remember that the western edge of the Winchester district only begins to go forward—like all such boundaries—*after* the Catholic Church had begun to civilize its court. Some put the place of "The Oak" near Cricklade, but no one really knows where it was.

for Easter (as did the Irish at the same time) as a symbol of their schism. They declared for isolation.

It was a very grave matter indeed, for it meant the challenging by the Welsh of what was then by far the strongest force in the European world. It meant the lending to what had hitherto been the heathen East of this island of all the immense driving power of the Catholic Church. It meant the expansion of culture and language over the island from the little courts of Canterbury and Winchester, and the further isolation and starvation of the West.

St. Augustine made a second effort, summoning, it seems, all the western bishops—seven in number. But they still refused to recover unity with Rome, so much had 200 years of isolation barbarized them. The great missionary prophesied that, as they would not convert the East, they should suffer the Eastern sword ; next year in 604 he died, but not before he had founded a bishopric at Rochester under Justus, and another at London under Mellitus.

and a second time

The King of the old Trinobantian area—now called Essex,[1] i.e. " under the court of the East Saxons "—counted London as within its area. There the kinglet (Sæbert by name), who was the nephew of the Kentish kinglet, helped to found St. Paul's, and there the Mass was again heard in what had always been, and still is, much the largest city of Britain.

The King of Essex is baptized

This first missionary effort — in the absence of the now schismatic westerners—did little more. The old Iceni country—Norfolk and Suffolk (now called after the court and kinglet of the " East Angles ")—was not greatly affected, for its petty head, one Redwald, hesitated. He had been baptized at Canterbury, but he had no weight of comrades behind him, and on his return north of the Stour he allowed a sort of mixture in his little court—without a

The King of Norfolk and Suffolk is baptized but hesitates

[1] It stretched between the Stour and the Thames.

bishop. He had an altar for the Christian Mass, but he kept another for his local barbarian godkins.

Pope Gregory dies, A.D. 604

The first effort, therefore, was, after seven years, in 604, very insecurely rooted, and only is in this small corner of the heathen east. In that same year Gregory the Great also died.

His plan seemed near to failure. The great scheme for restoring all the old Roman bishoprics, with London at the head and York as second chief see for the north, was shrunk, through the refusal of the western sees, into an abortive effort very ill-founded and insecure. There was a Catholic court at Canterbury (the chief, it is true, of the eastern parts), which, already partly civilized through French influence, had its Archbishop and a Christian king, with some thousands of a flock. Through him a nephew, kinglet of Essex, had admitted a mission and accepted baptism. Sees were fixed at Rochester and at London. North of the Stour a vague influence had been felt. For the rest, all was unchanged. Half a hundred local leaders or more were wrangling all over the island, raiding from east to west and west to east in perpetual combat;[1] and all those on the coast and in the Midlands, save in this south-eastern corner, were still unlettered and sunk in barbarism. Sussex was so and the Thames above London, and all the North Sea coast beyond the Stour, and the Hampshire coast, with its court at Winchester. The bulk of England, the middle country far from the sea, was a blank with records lost and leaving nothing for us to know. The lakes, Lancashire and Cheshire, the Severn Valley, the Cotswolds, Devon, Cornwall, Somerset, all Wales, maintained their fossil fragment of Christendom unquickened by the return of Rome.

His success so far doubtful and very limited

[1] For instance, a kinglet of Winchester raids right to the Severn, in 577, taking three towns and killing their three little "kings." Seven years later, in what is presumably a counter raid eastward by the Welsh, he is beaten, and seven years after that disgrace expelled from his capital by (presumably) his own subjects.

(B) The Conversion of the East

(A.D. 604–A.D. 664—60 Years)

Ethelbert, the Christian prince of Kent, lived on till February, A.D. 616, twelve years after St. Augustine's death. It was a useful "bridge," for it just tided over the beginning of a reaction which might have ended the recovery of Britain and left it barbaric for ever.

The Christian King of Kent dies, A.D. 616

Kent hesitated. Ethelbert's son Eadbert had never been baptized, and he quarrelled with the Italian Laurentius, the successor of St. Augustine at Canterbury. He had married his father's young widow: the act was odious to civilized Christendom. The Archbishop withstood him, and with difficulty succeeded; Eadbert yielded, for the influence of civilization so near the straits was too strong for him. Further north, nothing held. The kinglet of Essex was succeeded by pagan sons and a pagan nephew, who expelled Mellitus from London; Justus left Rochester. Only Canterbury remained (617). There Mellitus followed Laurentius (who died in 619), maintaining a point of Roman light on the edge of the darkness, and on *his* death (624) Justus continued the tradition of the Canterbury See. But all else had gone.

His son is doubtful

And Essex lapses

Then came a temporary advance, to understand which we must observe how the little heathen regions of the east lay one to another.

Next to Kent westward, in Sussex—the old district of the Regni—was some pagan chieftain or other in Chichester. The clay of the central part had fallen back to oak and thorn scrub (the Forest of Andred), the sea coast was pagan, and

Isolation of Sussex

by this time fallen back into complete barbarism. It had no effect on its neighbours.

The "Gewissæ" of the Thames valley

On the Thames above London, and in the country to the south of it, towards Hampshire, was the region of those called originally by the British name of "Gewissæ,"[1] who came to be called also, much later, by way of parallel to the other neighbouring names, "West Saxons." The principal chief of these parts probably had his court at Winchester, but there was some unknown number of lesser kings—certainly more than five—sharing out this district, which stretched beyond Thames into Oxfordshire. The principal chieftain, or head kinglet, claimed a descent from some half mythical person with a British, Celtic name, "Cerdic," who (so a much later tradition tells us) had, more than a century before, set up his rule at Winchester. After him we hear of a certain historical ruler there, also with a British name, Ceawlin. He was the hero of that raid—fifty to sixty years before this date—into the west, when he sacked Bath, Cirencester, and Gloucester, but later was beaten and his brother killed, and then himself expelled in some combination against him.

Their little British royal house at Winchester

At this moment, 624, the head kinglet over this Winchester group was yet another man of British name, one Cynegils.

We do not know what proportion of this district spoke the Eastern, Teutonic, and what the Celtic, or Western, dialects. But in what was then far more important than language, religion, we may presume that the great majority (and certainly the little court) were pagan and barbaric.

Essex (with London) had its barbaric court at Colchester, again pagan, with the remains of such converts as Mellitus had made.

To the north of the Stour and up to the Wash, the old

[1] We know this from Asser, a Welshman, who clearly gives it as a Celtic name. Every effort has been made to twist it into a Teutonic origin, but without success.

country of the Iceni, now coming to be called, after its government, "East Angles," was divided into we know not how many sub-groups, but had one head prince: that same Redwald whom we have seen, earlier, nibbling at the new culture from the south. His districts also were in the mass clearly barbaric and pagan.

The pagan north-east. Lincolnshire

Beyond lay country of which we know very little. Along the coast, between the North Sea and the Trent Valley, was the desolate flat and the wolds, which had only one centre: the old Roman city of Lincoln. That town had, of course, kept up its life and continuity like all our Roman towns.[1] But it was also, of course, less peopled than of old, far less rich, and fallen back to paganism; its speech probably of the eastern dialects. It gave its name to the whole region. What local chiefs may have ruled we do not know.

Durham, Northumberland and Yorkshire called Deira

North again, beyond Humber, ran a strip of deserted sea coast where the pirates had been able to settle. Here there was, in the narrow sea belt, a strong local feeling and racial pride. The belt kept, however, its British-Roman names —"Deira," for Yorkshire, south of Tees; "Bernicia," for Durham and Northumberland, north of that river. The pirate stronghold of the latter, whence government had been established in the breakdown of society, was the coastal rock and castle of *Bamborough*, the traditional home of its chieftains. In the former the plain of York and the Roman town of York itself was the seat of a local kinglet, whose family claimed rule, with intermittent separation and reunion, over all "Northumbria"—the general term for Bernicia and Deira combined, because they lay north of Humber.

and Bernicia have pagan Kings

In and just after St. Augustine's time the chief ruler on the east coast north of the Humber was one Æthelfrith.

[1] Britain maintained its town life with less interruption than neighbouring parts of the Empire, isolated though it was. Only two of its many cities decayed—Uriconium and Silchester. The rest subsist to this day, and form the centres of shires—Exeter, Gloucester, Winchester, Lincoln, York, Carlisle, Chester, London, Chichester, Canterbury, Colchester, Newcastle, Salisbury, etc.

The Pennines and the Lakes Christian Kings

The wild hill central country just to the west, the Pennines, was very sparsely inhabited by Celtic-speaking and certainly Christian people. A little Celtic chieftain (another Cerdic) held Leeds. Beyond, again, to the further west, the Cumberland mountains and Carlisle were Christian in the same fashion as the rest of the west, and the Lancashire plain (of which we know nothing certain), was presumably in the same state. The marshes of the Mersey cut it off from the Celtic and Christian Chester district, which joined on with the Christian and Celtic principalities of North and Middle Wales.

Incohesion of all these small governments

The characteristic of all this North England round about 600 was its intermixture. Men wandered throughout its districts Pagan and Christian, Celtic-speaking and Teutonic-speaking. A powerful chief could get leadership over the whole of it in one campaign, and be reversed by another chieftain in a single battle. It had no cement.

Their mutual raidings

Æthelfrith was a leader of this kind. In 613 he led a great raid westward right to the Dee, and defeated a Welsh king near Chester, with great slaughter of his monks. Twenty years later, as we shall see, a converse raid *eastward* drove right to the North Sea shore, under a Welsh king, and all but established a Celtic kingdom from sea to sea.

What lay in the *Midlands?* What society was there south of the Peak, in the upper Trent Valley, east of the Severn Basin and west of the heathen kinglets of the North Sea coast and the Fens?

We have very little with which to answer that question. Such as it is, here is the evidence.

The Midlands called by the Roman name of "Mercia"

The vague general name for this central blob was the Roman name *Mercia*, the country of the "March" or "Marches." "Marca" was the usual administrative term used, in the transformation of Roman society, for a boundary district in which two languages and (what is more important) two religions, pagan and Christian, mingled. It

is a word the underlying idea of which reappears in *market* and *merchant*—a meeting-place or boundary.

We may be certain, therefore, that all this Midland oval (the district of Derby—suburb of a Roman town—in the north; of Huntingdon—suburb of a Roman town—in the east; of Leicester—"camp of the Legion"—the Roman "Ratæ" in the midst; and, to the south, all that lay north of the Warwickshire wood of Arden) was, as might be expected, a melting-pot of language and even of religion round about A.D. 600. The pirates had—probably—sailed up the Trent. The "East Angle" court beyond the fens called their neighbours in the upper fen rivers "Mid Angles." On the other hand, this undefined group of little districts clearly had its closest relations rather with the west, and with the Severn Valley and Wales, than with the North Sea. What proportion was pagan, what Christian, what Celtic-speaking, what Teutonic, and what a mixture of both, we cannot tell. But it was naturally getting more and more pagan and barbaric in the general decline. There is no trace of a bishopric.

Mercia is mainly attached to Welsh west, but a mixture of tongues and religions

The real point about this hotch-potch, round about the years 610-620, was that a remarkable young [1] soldier was then present among the people of the sub-district round the old Roman centre of Derby. Later his family claimed, when civilization, advancing from the east coast, had acquired prestige, an "Angle" descent. But his name is obviously not Germanic, and in part, at least, Celtic.

Penda one of the many chiefs in Mercia

At any rate, he was a pagan, and, of whatever blood, ruled some portion or other of the little district. He was called *Penda*.

With this survey of the little pagan kingdoms and sub-kingdoms lying east and north of the Christian corner in Kent about A.D. 600-620, we can appreciate what followed.

[1] A century later and more he had become half legendary, so that he is said to be still fighting in the saddle and doing great execution at *eighty* years of age! I don't believe it.

Edwin and Æthelfrith of Northumbria

Æthelfrith was jealous of a young rival and brother-in-law, Edwin, whom some would regard as a claimant to leadership in the North, because he was the traditional heir to the traditional founder of the house of Deira (Æthelfrith, of the house of Bernicia, had only married into it).[1] Deira, being the eastern part of Yorkshire, with good land and a Roman town, York, for capital, was more important than Bernicia, the rugged bare coast of Durham and Northumberland.

Edwin had been put for safety at the court of a kinglet in North Wales: it is typical of the inter-communication throughout the North in that time. There he saw the Mass and became familiar with Christian things in their decayed western form, which had kept the Latin tradition but had forgotten the Latin unity. Thence the young man got eastward to the court of that Redwald in Norfolk or Suffolk whom we have seen hesitating upon the reception of the Roman mission. It was a further experience of Christian things, though again in a doubtful form, for the Christian element there was very weak, and there was no bishop. Æthelfrith, hearing of Edwin's refuge, summoned Redwald to give him up. Redwald refused, and in a consequent battle defeated and killed Æthelfrith, in 617 (Battle of the Idle). (All these things happened within a few months of Ethelbert's death in Kent, and are part of one movement.) Edwin, therefore, in that year, 617, was received as head king in Northumbria.

Death of Æthelfrith of Northumbria Battle of the Idle, A.D. 617

The details of succession among these petty leaders and their fights are wearisome and unimportant, but the next matter is essential to English history.

[1] It is hardly worth while to consider the supposed and real genealogies of these innumerable little chiefs, but, for what it is worth, here is the connection :—

Aella (said to have founded the House of Deira). — Ida (said to have founded the House of Bernicia).

Æthelric.

Edwin. — Acha = Æthelfrith.

Edwin, in A.D. 625, married the daughter of the dead Ethelbert, the grand-daughter, therefore, of the great Catholic King at Paris, and the cousin of the King of Paris then reigning. *This meant the introduction of civilization to the North-East coast.* Justus, the Roman Archbishop at Canterbury, consecrated as bishop another Roman, Paulinus, whom St. Gregory the Great had sent to Augustine in Kent twenty years before. Justus sent him north with the bride, to refound and preside over the See of York (A.D. 626).

French and Roman civilization reach North England through Edwin's marriage, A.D. 625

Next year, A.D. 627, Edwin took on his wife's religion and opened the door to Europe on the North coast. Paulinus, holding the King and Court, baptized a very large minority of the Northumbrian people. It was an extremely rapid and successful advance. The *prefect* of Lincoln (the Roman title of the local official is preserved by Bede) was baptized, and the movement spread rapidly southward towards the Wash.

Edwin and the Præfectus of Lincoln are baptized, A.D. 627

South of the Wash, in the next year or two, the tide of civilization advanced by another channel. Hitherto there had been no bishop between the Wash and the Stour. A certain Sigebert, who had a claim to kingship over East Anglia, returned from exile in France, where he had got the training of Europe, and brought with him Felix, a bishop from South-Eastern France, to preside at *Dummoc*,[1] as the existing British name was—the great port and perhaps largest town of that shore. All the East coast was quickly getting instructed and civilized.

Felix, a French bishop, brings back religion to East Anglia

Edwin, supported by this tide, now that he had accepted baptism, the Mass, and letters, became the chief of all North England, and the agent of the sweeping change. He restored or continued the old Roman Insignia, had the Tufa[2] borne before him in his progresses, demanded and received some sort of allegiance from the princes in the Welsh hills,

Edwin rules most of England and adopts the Roman insignia of power

[1] Later called Dunwich: long a chief port under that name throughout the Middle Ages. Now washed away.

[2] A staff with a crown of feathers: a later Roman Ensign of State.

put a fleet on the Irish sea, and gave orders to Mercia and the Midlands. He came down south and got submission of that Cynegils, head king of the Middle Thames and of Winchester; an act which later led this chief to be baptized by the Roman Birinus. Birinus had come as missionary from the reigning Pope, Honorius, who had had him consecrated bishop by the Archbishop of Milan. He set out to preach to the "Gewissæ" up the Thames, above London. In the year after Edwin's death, and under pressure of Edwin's successor (as we shall see in a moment), but through the tradition of Edwin's power, the Faith and its culture got their first hold west of London.

and makes Cynegils of the "Gewissæ" be baptized

In 633 came a diversion of strange consequence to the North of England. It nearly divided the island for the future into Northern and Southern instead of Eastern and Western. This diversion was the overwhelming victory of a Welsh, Christian, Celtic kinglet allied with Mercians. This battle all but drove the Northumbrian princes into the sea. When they recovered their strip of coast, their court, still Christian, derived not from the Roman missionaries—hitherto sole instructors of all the eastern courts—but from newly-arrived *Irish* monks. The northern courts—York and Bamborough—were taught the Irish religious usages. The Irish tongue, closely allied to the western British dialects, was becoming the missionary language; and it looked, for thirty years, as though all north of Humber would take its culture from the great western island, and the tradition of St. Patrick. It was not till 664 that St. Wilfred fixed, over the North, the main Church and civilization of Europe, which had already mastered the South.

The Welsh victory in the North, 633, and its consequence: The Northern court has Irish priests and customs

The episode is of such importance to the story of England, that though it took place amid a small distant body of people—less than three of our counties—all Englishmen should know the details of its event.

That decisive event developed as follows.

In A.D. 633 the position of Edwin as head king through-

out the North was broken. Cadwallon, a prince of North Wales,[1] whom he had defeated and driven into exile, returned and challenged him. That Midland pagan soldier, Penda, whom we saw present on the Trent some years before, brought up for Cadwallon his mixed Mercian host, and the combined army overwhelmed Edwin's force at Hatfield, on the descent from the Pennine hills, near Doncaster, on October 12th, 633. Edwin was killed. All was overrun to the sea coast by the Welsh and Mercians. Two princes succeeding Edwin were killed by the invaders—one while suing for a vassal peace. Paulinus fled back south with Edwin's widow. The Church was but barely maintained in the plain of York and on the coast by such converts as remained.

Oct. 12, A.D. 633, The battle of Hatfield

There was a rally. Æthelfrith (whom Edwin had succeeded) had left a son Oswald, who had gone into exile during Edwin's power, just as Edwin had under Æthelfrith's. Now Oswald, in his exile, had gone north into Scotland, and had been baptized by the *Irish* monks of Iona. That accident was now to take effect. Oswald won an unexpected victory over Cadwallon and restored the Northumbrian kingdom. He had at his side the saintly Aidan, Irish and full of zeal.

Oswald and the Irish of Iona

But the Mercian mixture with its Welsh allies was too strong for him: the dialect, the chieftainships of the Teutonic-speaking strip of coast line would not have crossed the Pennines had not the Roman order and discipline finally triumphed, and carried all before it in a subsequent steady advance westward throughout Britain. The Penda and Welsh combination caught Oswald in a raid carried perhaps to Oswestry, there defeated and killed him —in 642—and thenceforward for thirteen years—till 655— the heathen midland people under Penda, backed by his Welsh recruitment, penned the Eastern kingdoms back.

But the North goes Roman again

[1] Or Strathclyde.

after the battle of the Winwæd, A.D. 654

The event which re-established Northumbria was the battle of the Winwæd in the Pennines, near Leeds. There the Welsh armies were defeated, and Penda, with them, was killed. It was Oswy, Oswald's brother, who won this victory. But little came of it. He had married his daughter to Penda's Christian son, Peada (murdered the next year). He took over the little district of Leeds, and put in his own clergy (those formerly there had been Welsh), levied tribute from it, and even sent in some of his own people. But Peada's son recovered his father's old power, and Mercia still dominated, even receiving acknowledgment from Sussex. Its king was Christian, but the Roman unity of liturgy and obedience was not achieved on the east coast: its complete rule from north to south was not achieved. Therefore the eastern kingships remained of little account. As for that of Winchester, it fell to pieces. There was a sort of anarchy there. Had things so stood England might have continued indefinitely a scene of ceaseless wars between chieftains of no significance, Welsh on the one edge of the island, Saxon-speaking on the other, and nondescript in between.

What changed everything, what gave England to the Teutonic-speaking courts, was the *Council of Whitby*[1] in 664, as important a date as there is in all our history, for it established a united Catholic Church all down the eastern side of England and left it free to go forward and westward on a united front.

Oswy, with his court of Northumbria, was Christian of the Irish Communion, as his brother Oswald had been. It kept Easter after the old Calendar, as did the Welsh-speaking courts. It was not fully subject to Rome. Had it so remained all North England now might be of the Celtic speech

[1] Held in the convent of Abbess Hilda, on the coast of the bay called "Streamshalch" ("the Bay of the Lighthouse"), later Whitby. Present at Wilfred's side was Agilbert, a Frenchman, late bishop of the Winchester kingdom, with Dorchester on the Thames for his see, soon after Bishop of Paris.

and culture, and the unity of Britain never restored—for the Midlands were being evangelized also from the Irish monks.

Two forces achieved the spiritual annexation of the North and Midlands. The first was Oswy's marriage. His queen had been brought up in Kent. Her influence had the prestige of the new civilization and Communion with Rome behind it. The second was the great, the combative Abbot of Ripon, St. Wilfred, a man trained in Rome and at Lyons: full of Europe.

and the Council of Whitby, A.D. 664

Between them Oswy was at Whitby convinced of the necessity of allying himself with universal Christendom. Colman, the Irish successor of Aidan (he had never learnt the dialect of the court), refused to remain. Tuda, though of Irish training, conformed and was made bishop. The bulk of the Northern and Midland clergy submitted, and the thing was concluded. All Britain, not still pagan or Welsh, was henceforward in communion with Rome.

Henceforward the anarchy was ended, and the westward advance of courts, armies, bishoprics, and language from the East Coast was assured.

(C) From the Council of Whitby to the Accession of Offa

(A.D. 664–A.D. 757—93 Years)

The Council of Whitby did not complete the conversion of England, still less the full recovery of the mass of the island to the unity of European civilization. Great patches of the south, all Sussex and the Isle of Wight, and probably much of Hampshire, were still in the bulk pagan, although individual Christians of prominence had come from those parts already, notably the first native Archbishop of Canterbury, Deusdedit, and a king of Sussex as well.

There were also undoubtedly very large numbers still to be baptized, perhaps a majority, in that welter of the Midlands where the languages jostled one another and where apparently most men of both races and tongues had lapsed into heathenism, since the cessation of direct rule from Rome.

Effect of the Council of Whitby

But the Council of Whitby determined the general current of the future. England was to be part of Europe and in communion with Rome, and that was as much as to say that the Anglo-Saxon dialects were to spread at the expense of the Celtic; that the kinglets of the East, in Northumberland and York and Winchester, were to be backed by the whole power of the Church in the expansion of their political area westward, and that England was to be what in fact she became throughout the Dark Ages—Anglo-Saxon in official speech and not Celtic, as she would have become had the result of the Council of Whitby been otherwise.

What follows is the story of the re-organization of the

Catholic Church in Britain. The fighting among the petty chieftains is of no real importance, and many phrases attached to it in our text-books, such as "Victory of Mercia," "Northumbria annexes Strathclyde," etc., are utterly misleading. They suggest great political events, whereas all such things were mere bouts of small war bands attached to local chiefs of changing fortune. The salient political fact of the time was the unity, discipline, and ordering of all society by the Church, first as one province under Canterbury, created by Rome and overlooked from Rome; later, of two provinces, Canterbury and York, of the same creation, and overlooked in the same manner.

St. Wilfred and St. Theodore of Tarsus

In this church story we have first the name of St. Wilfred, the great civilizing prelate of the North, the Bishop of York, who had so many connections with Paris, the Continent, and Rome; next, and in immediate contact with St. Wilfred, that great Archbishop of Canterbury who organized all the English Church, the Greek nominee of the Pope, Theodore of Tarsus.

Between them they carry the story on to 709. After that date, although the famous history of the Venerable Bede continues for just over twenty years, nothing of moment happens in England save the gradual extension of Roman civilization under the power of the Church, westward, through the Church's support of the eastern kinglets. Of this extension the chief example is to be found in the case of a kinglet of Winchester, bearing the curious (and doubtfully Teutonic) name of Ina; and another example with less data remaining to us is the case of Ethelbald, a violent chieftain of the Midlands, who seems to have been admitted head of that mass of small princedoms.

The Synod of Whitby was hardly over when Oswy, the kinglet of the North, quarrelled with St. Wilfred. Tuda, the Bishop of York, died in the year of Whitby. Oswy, of course, wanted St. Wilfred, the religious master of his kingdom, to succeed. St. Wilfred went abroad for consecration

at the hands of the Bishops of Gaul (for the Archbishop of Canterbury had just died, as we shall see). St. Wilfred was duly consecrated bishop in a great ecclesiastical meeting at Compiègne, among those present being that Bishop of Paris, his friend Agilbert, the Frenchman who had formerly been Bishop at Winchester. St. Wilfred was very slow in returning to England, and, whether because that irritated Oswy, or because the actual nomination of St. Wilfred was not in Oswy's name, but in that of his son—a circumstance which may have annoyed the old man—Oswy, without waiting for Wilfred's return, suddenly nominated to York in his absence a very saintly apostolic priest (probably a Celt) of the name of Chad (in the original Ceadda), whose brother was already bishop at Colchester. St. Chad was consecrated by three bishops, of whom two came from the old western, Christian part of the island (either Devonshire or Wales), a proof of the way in which the Roman influence was affecting all Britain rapidly. St. Wilfred came back too late (being wrecked on his way upon the heathen coasts of Sussex, but escaping) and tarried at Canterbury, doing the work of the see there, which, as we have seen, was vacant through the death of Deusdedit and the later death of Wighard, who had been chosen to succeed Deusdedit, had gone to Rome for the Pallium, but had died during the journey.

Quarrel of Oswy and St. Wilfred

Meanwhile the Pope, Vitalian, made a remarkable choice for filling the see of Canterbury. He fixed upon an elderly man of sixty, a famous and most learned monk of Greek speech, from the Eastern Empire, from Tarsus—the monk Theodore. He gave him for companion a man of almost equal fame for learning, the monk Hadrian, an abbot from Africa; and these two, coming to England in 668, brought with them such high scholarship as Northern Gaul had not yet known, and made England, and especially Canterbury and York, centres of schools in which the classics were perpetuated and in which Greek stood side by side with Latin.

Pope Vitalian nominates St. Theodore to Canterbury

He brings Greek learning to England

It was the business of Theodore of Tarsus to transform what had hitherto been the missionary church of Britain into a regular system of episcopal sees, with the beginnings of a parochial system and orders for Church councils, to be regularly held and canons to be framed. So far, the bishoprics, though attached to sees, were too closely connected with the little courts of the chieftains; the Bishop of York was the chief cleric at the court of the kinglet there, and the same was true of East Anglia and of Essex, and in some degree of the Winchester court as well, though the seat of the bishop was not actually in the city.

and organizes the Church

Theodore began by reconciling Oswy to Wilfred: that was to get clear ground on which to work. He sent St. Chad to the Midlands, and founded a see for him there at *Lichfield*.

Foundation of the See of Lichfield

He next appointed a bishop to East Anglia in the place of the aged Boniface, who retired through infirmity; filled up the see of Rochester; put the Frenchman Eleutherius (nephew of Agilbert of Paris) into Wessex, but oddly enough left Bishop Wini at London—though he had purchased that see and held it by Simony. All this new organization was completed before the end of 671, the year in which Oswy died.

His further activity in filling sees

On September 24th, 673, he took the great step of summoning the first provincial synod of Britain, the Synod of Hertford. It established canons in line with the whole Western Patriarchate, made provision for yearly synods in future at some unknown place called "Cloveshoe" (they were never regularly held), and proceeded to the main work —the Ninth Clause—*the provision of more numerous dioceses*. That was Theodore's master plan.

The Council of Hertford

He made two fixed sees for East Anglia apart from the court: one at Dunwich and one at Elmham, the first for Suffolk, the second for Norfolk. He deposed the successor of St. Chad in Lichfield—who was recalcitrant. Then came the clash with St. Wilfred. Theodore proposed the division of the great diocese of York; he, with the aid of the new

kinglet in York, one Egfrith (who had quarrelled with St. Wilfred) promulgated this division as a law, and that without consulting the ruling bishop. He, Wilfred, was to keep Deira (which was about, or more than, half Yorkshire). But Bernicia was to have two new sees carved out of York; Durham was to have a new bishopric at Hexham, and Northumberland one at Lindisfarne. A fourth was to be established for Lincolnshire. Wilfred protested as of right, and went off to appeal at Rome to Pope Agatho, before whom he laid the case in 679 and 680. In his absence, St. Theodore declared him deposed and contumacious, and filled his see.

St. Wilfred rejects St. Theodore's plan for the North and appeals to Rome

The Pope's decision was a wise one. He said the great northern diocese must be divided, but that St. Wilfred should name the new bishops, and, of course, retain his own see of York. So St. Wilfred returned to York the victor; but Egfrith imprisoned him in Durham, and on his release (in 681) he went off first to the Midlands and then missionizing on the still heathen southern coast.

The Pope's decision

St. Wilfred is exiled

This missionary journey forms one of the most interesting, detailed pictures of the Dark Ages we possess. We see the people of Sussex sunk through the breakdown of Roman rule into a very low culture—nearly barbaric, but still retaining the old Roman arrangements of *villæ*, cultivated by slaves, and the old Roman district under its *Regulus*, or little local king. The account of the land which that king gave to St. Wilfred to enable him to found a bishop's see at Selsea shows us that the Roman *villæ* were unchanged, as they are unchanged to this day—the same villages we have now in the district with, presumably, the same boundaries. We also find much the same agricultural population as we do to-day and the slaves are nearly three times as numerous as the free men.

and evangelizes Sussex

There is in connection with that conversion of Sussex another most illuminating story—the story of Cædwalla—the young Welsh-named pagan leader of a band who fought

Cædwalla

for and gained the chieftainship at Winchester, conquered the Isle of Wight, extended his power over Sussex, and at last reluctantly accepted the Faith. He went to Rome to be baptized by the Pope, and there, at Rome, just after his baptism, he died—in 688.

Meanwhile, in the North, the old, vague power of Northumbria, based on the rapid Romanization of the mission and on the Council of Whitby, was dwindling. It received a heavy blow when, in 685, its King, Egfrith, St. Wilfred's enemy, was destroyed with all his army during a raid far into Scotland. He fell at "the Crane's Pool," or, as the Northumbrians called it, "Nectansmere," near Dunnichen in Forfarshire. All claim to rule—ever vague—north of the border was lost, though Carlisle and the see of Galloway remained attached in some slight way to the Yorkshire court. From that blow Northumbria never recovered. Its insignificant court or courts linger on in a worse and worse confusion till the Danish pirates extinguish them, a century later and more.

Northumbria loses its power. Battle of Nectansmere

But the Church and civilization, as a whole, were still organizing the island westward. Theodore was to die—at a great age, over eighty, in 690. But before he died there was a bishopric of his province founded as far west as Hereford, and the district not much later appears in history as the seat of the "Magæ," the name given from the local Roman town to its people.

St. Wilfred lived on to 709, and the next twenty years are memorable chiefly for the example of Ina of Winchester, whose court, under the pressure of the new clerical tide, organizes its direct power further and further into the West. By the time that local chief retired, to die in Rome, he had fixed his frontier at Exeter, and had fortified Taunton as a centre whence to rule Somerset. It is a notable example of the way in which power went westward, and later, with it, language. For all that new country must have been Welsh-speaking. Nor is there any planting apparent. Yet by

Ina (or Ini) of Winchester

MAP VIII

THE RECOVERY OF ENGLAND AFTER THE GREAT CATHOLIC ADVANCE, 600-737

900 it was already bilingual, and by 1000 it would seem only of one Anglo-Saxon speech.

Ina has left a curious monument for us in his laws, which are genuine and largely incomprehensible. They are based, of course, like all the codes of the Dark Ages, on the late Roman institution of the *Compositio*, called in the vernacular "Wer" (gild), which was (nominally), so far as can be made out, *the sum at which a man was assessed* (for instance, the sum his relations could nominally claim as damages if he were killed), but in practice a method of dividing men into classes for the purpose of estimating the value of their oaths when they went guarantee for an accused man's innocence. The only real interest of this obscure old local code is the presence in it of Welsh-speaking men at the court of Winchester, and in its regular and military employ. It is a valuable witness to how gradual was the extension westward, not of a race, but of an official and Church-backed court language. Ina's laws

Of the twenty-eight years between Ina's abdication and the end of our period, no record worth stating remains. The little kingdoms warred, the Church continued to expand and consolidate her domain until, with the advent of Offa, the first premature beginnings of a national unity half appear.

One Ethelbald in the Midlands disturbed the time by ceaseless raids and claims upon his weaker neighbours, eastern and western. He was a chance adventurer, putting forth some doubtful claim to leadership and seizing power, like Cædwalla before, in very early youth. He kept up a turbulent headship of Mercia, and overawed his neighbours till about 750, when his war-band lost a heavy battle at Burford against that of the Winchester king. In 757 he was murdered by his guard. After a few months or weeks' interval, during which an obscure successor tried to hold his place, young OFFA, claiming a distant kinship with Ethelbald, killed that successor and became a real ruler of the Midlands. Ethelbald in Mercia (716-757)

Is killed, and Offa, in 757, seizes power

With his day we enter a new chapter in English affairs. The action of the Catholic Church has recovered and restored one full province of Europe. The ultimate unity of England is in sight, and the insignificant county princes, with their endless skirmishes, are replaced by true and great historical names and by real kingship.

NOTE.—Ina's laws are, in part at least, obviously based on an earlier French model (as, in the blessing of the Ordeal), and were presumably drawn up by the clergy in Latin, the official language for all such things. A translation of them into the vernacular—of uncertain date—exists. The Latin original of an earlier set, Ethelbert's, is lost. Both are extant in a version centuries later than their dates, but both are probably authentic.

III

Offa and Egbert

A.D. 757–A.D. 839

82 Years

III

OFFA AND EGBERT

The Disappointed Unity

(A.D. 757–839—82 Years)

(*From the accession of Offa in the Midlands to the death of Egbert, King at Winchester*)

THE year 757 is a fixed mark in the history of England, not because it was the date of a battle or council, but because what might have been the regular development of a united nation then begins. It was the year in which young Offa, a nobleman's son, was made kinglet of the Midlands. From kinglet he at last became what had not yet been in England since the anarchy, a powerful monarch. Of the man himself we know very little, and we have nothing whereby to judge his character, save that evidently he struck his contemporaries by something more than his position: there is a note of personality in foreign relations with him. But far more important than his own self was the moment in which he appeared.

Britain was nearly re-united. The Church, with its then overwhelming power, had welded or restored the last unit of the West. You still hear of marriages and alliances, of wars between the chieftains of the various districts and their little bands of warriors, but there is this capital difference between them and those of the earlier welter, that they mark the absorption of each defeated or allied province in turn, and that, as the life of Offa proceeds, he becomes more and more in the eyes of contemporary Europe (of which

England was now an intimate part) the " Rex Anglorum." [1] The battles between the little armies and the inter-marriages between the other little courts might never have taken place, and still the rapidly forming unity of England under the action of the Church would have shown itself.

It was, indeed, of service in the process that both Offa, and his successor in the headship of England, Egbert, lived long. Between them their reigns (with a short interval of less than six years) cover the most protracted human memories: a space of eighty-two years. Offa reigned a king of increasing power for just on forty years; Egbert for over thirty-seven. During all that time England takes a higher and higher place in Christendom, and it is the long lifetime in which was founded what might have been—what looked as though it were certain to be—the uninterrupted advance of England as one nation and her complete admission to the unity of the Occident.

It was a time in which all was propitious to such creation of a united England to take its full place again as a province of Christendom.

A lifetime earlier (712, 713) Christendom had suffered the fearful wound of the Spanish revolution. The African Mohammedan, allied with and supported by the Jewish residents in the Christian cities, had swept over the Peninsula and had mastered it, to rule for centuries as an alien government over its Catholic millions, and only to be thrust back slowly in these great wars of the tenth and eleventh centuries, which trained the chivalry of Europe on the high plains of Aragon and Castille—for all European knighthood helped as recruits the reconquest of Spain.

In the previous generation this tide of devastation had penetrated right into the heart of Gaul, and the threat of

[1] I do not refer to the Charter title of 790 and 775 (not 772). This *may* have done no more than affirm his hold on East Anglia, though much more probably it was a general title. But what is decisive is that both Charlemagne and the Pope call him " Rex Anglorum," and think of him as the ruler of one realm.

an Europe ruined at the hands of Asia and of Africa was only checked as late as 732 at Moussais-la-Bataille, in the fork of the Clain and the Vienne, between Tours and Poitiers. There Charles Martel, the acting monarch of the Gauls, broke a vast Arab and Moorish host in a week-long battle, and turned the tide.

But by the day of Offa and Egbert the reaction against the Mohammedans and the pagans pressing from South and East was in full swing. The Western Christendom of the Continent—now reduced to Northern Italy and France—was falling under the headship of one family, descendants of Roman nobles of Narbonne (the Ferreoli), and was dominant in Latin-speaking Eastern France and Belgium. This family, crowned kings at last, culminated in Charlemagne, who spent his life in the saddle, and re-established the West. This great soldier, the son of Martel's son, inherited personal government over all the Occident outside Italy. His immediate ancestry—great nobles who, from the South of France, had fixed themselves on those of their immense estates which lay to the North—had acted first as chief ministers and then as masters of the kings descended from Clovis. Charlemagne's father, Pepin, Martel's son, had at last ousted the old line and been crowned king with the Pope's aid. Charlemagne therefore entered on an inheritance which gave him full authority over the West, and for an instrument of power the whole recruiting field of France and the narrow belt of German-speaking Christians on either side of the Rhine—he had himself, through the women, some Germanic blood. But no one troubled in these days about speech or race : the issue was between what was left of free Christendom—that is, France, with a German fringe—and the menace of death : the menace from brilliant Islam, from Spain, and the Mediterranean which the Mohammedans controlled : the menace from the German, Scandinavian, and Mongol pagan pressing on the North and East.

Charlemagne thrust back the Saracens to the Ebro. He

built with arms upon the spiritual foundation of a papal legate, the Englishman Boniface, and undertook to civilize all the Germanies, that barbaric strip between Rhine and Elbe, half pagan in the south, wholly pagan in the north. He raised vast Gallic armies admixed with some few Christian Flemings of the East, and German-speaking Christian lords of the Alsatian plain and of the Rhine, and broke the local resistance of the savage idolators, planted garrisons and outposts to the very limits of Denmark and of the Elbe itself, and brought into Europe, thus late, the whole of the German tribes. He even sent out against the Mongols as far as Hungary, and sacked their round earthwork of a central camp. He founded the offensive-defensive of the Christians against all the forces which had been besieging them on south and east.

In the year 800 he and the Pope between them finally detached all the Roman inheritance from the surviving claim of Constantinople, and set up—restored—the Latin-speaking Empire of the West.[1] Henceforward Christendom included a new German territory, which rapidly acquired a sufficient—though primitive—culture from the English and Irish missionary effort, and from the Carlovingian garrisons. The frontiers of the Catholic Church had widely extended. They were destined to go forward till Poland, Hungary, and Scandinavia entered the general scheme through a process of two centuries, until, after three, even Islam was thrust back from its bastion in Spain.

England was fortunate in escaping, so far, the pressure of external enemies which had thus menaced Continental Christendom; was fortunate also in escaping the Quarrel of the Images, the heresy which had shaken all the Church

[1] But it must not be thought that the Roman centre at Constantinople abandoned its claim. Charlemagne himself had to plead as an excuse for setting up as Emperor in the West, the fact that the East was in the hands of a woman, and the headship of Constantinople was never formally destroyed. It died imperceptibly.

of the Mediterranean. By a nice irony, this struggle which had broken the last real link between the Emperor at Constantinople as civil lord and the Pope as his temporal subject, all but led to a quarrel between the Pope and Charlemagne. An Emperor of Constantinople, obviously suffering the Mohammedan influence of the time, had taken advantage of abuses in the veneration of images to order their destruction. The insane decision—with nothing but an army to enforce it—broke down ; but meanwhile it had rendered hostile the relations between Rome, the capital of Tradition, and the anti-Christian attack on holy images in the East. Charlemagne, desiring a new empire in the West, seized upon the occasion to show his opposition to the Greek culture, and as the populace there had acted somewhat extravagantly in the use of images, *he* thought it an opportunity for exaggeration on the other side. He tried to oppose the use of pictures and statues in his turn. But Rome advised him, the tumult was appeased, the due veneration of sacred images was made sure for ever, and the normal practice of religion restored.

From all this storm England lay apart and free. No heresy touched her ; no pagan or Mohammedan attack reached her. It was to the great advantage of her moral security and the advancement of her culture. Unfortunately her peace was not to last. The German paganism was tamed. But the Scandinavian was still free, and from the North were about to come those pirate fleets which harried all the coasts, but in particular ravaged Ireland and England, so that, in this island, the very fabric of Catholic civilization was shaken and barely saved.

Charlemagne died in 814, but the twenty-five years between his death and that of Egbert (who had been his younger guest in exile) were not disturbed, save, as we shall see, by pirate raids at the very end. England, then, during all this fortunate space of eighty-two years, lay secure and gave promise of becoming a permanent European realm.

That promise was disappointed. After Egbert the process was shockingly checked. England, which had been the most sheltered because the most distant of the Christian units, while our race and culture was beginning its recovery of Spain and beating culture into the heathen German, was, at the end of Egbert's reign, assaulted, later overrun, more fiercely than any other district of the Roman West. She nearly succumbed under the DANISH RAIDS, new pirate invasions from the North Sea, coming again after 400 years.

The division between 757 and 839, then, is the not-quite-a-century of arising English unity between the very last effects of the original chaos of little courts and the storm of the pirate sallies. Its origin is marked by the accession of Offa to the headship of Mercia, and its close by the death of Egbert of Wessex. It is the period of Egbert and Offa.

Unfortunately it is a time which has left little record of itself. Bede, the historian, was dead more than twenty years when young Offa seized the Midlands. The writing of what we call the "Chronicle" was not to come for more than a century. There are not a few charters, one or two letters. But of full and exact contemporary record there is none. We can only piece the meagre details together from what was later set down, with one or two contemporary events and documents to connect the dates; and even this is of value for the Midlands and South alone. The North fell into anarchy, and so remained till the pirates came to sweep over it.

(A) Offa: 757–*July 29th*, 796—39 Years

How old Offa was on taking the throne of Mercia is unknown. He was active in personal negotiation and travel to the moment of his death nearly forty years later. Not over, perhaps well under, thirty years of age at his accession is a probable estimate. Offa becomes King of Mercia

It is what we should expect of the time that his lineage also is uncertain. It was traced, of course, later to a royal stock in the remote past—all those who ruled in eastern and central Britain, or nearly all, are thus made, in subsequent legend, to fit in with a strict genealogy, and even, as a rule, to go back, as we have seen, to a half mythical hero "Woden"—even when they bear Celtic names! For all this was the effect of that political advance of the east coast courts and their language and legends, under the power of the Church opposing the Celtic schismatics. His descent unknown

But at any rate we know the name of Offa's grandfather (one Eanwulf), a giver of monasteries, and therefore a great landholder, and the assertion that this grandfather was a cousin of Ethelbald, a former kinglet in Mercia, is probable enough. Offa is even made out to be a great-great-nephew of the old kinglet Penda, whose origin we have seen to be equally obscure. Offa may have killed (as was said many centuries later) or he may have expelled his predecessor. He made some claim to a general overlordship. Fourteen years after his accession (in 771) there is a fragmentary record of his taking over by force the government of the "Hastings," of whom we know nothing.[1] Three or four His petty fighting

[1] The form of the name and *one* charter make some guess at "Hastings," the town, but geography is against it, and a people is not a seaport.

years later his armed band defeated that of the King of Kent at Otford, and he thus affirmed his overlordship of Canterbury and the archbishopric. Four years later again, in 779, he comes into the light more fully with a decisive success of his armed followers over those of the King of Winchester (Cynewulf), at Bensington, which gives him the taxes of the district up to the Thames. He had raided Wales the year before; he raided it again in 784; and, eleven years later, in 795, just before his death, there is another record of a Welsh raid. That is all we know of the insignificant local fighting, and it is of no historical importance.[1]

Beginning of English unity

What *is* of historical importance is the inevitable gathering of England into one management: the hands of whoever was dominant among the many chieftains; and that this position fell to Offa was abundantly clear. The Archbishop of Canterbury signs a charter side by side with him ten years after his accession. He gives land to the Church, of his own authority, in the Midlands as in his own region of Worcester; he signs "King of Kent" as he does "King of the Mercians." It is he who negotiates with the Continental authorities for the passage of English pilgrims to Rome. It is he whom the government of Charlemagne in Gaul regards as responsible for English action, he with whom a quarrel arises when such action is disputed, he to whom the future Emperor sends his ambassador and his letters, and he whom the Pope (wrongly) suspects of a plot to ally himself with some Continental power for the sake of setting up an anti-pope: a strong example of the power now attributed to Offa. Under him Europe begins to think of England as one.

[1] Offa's Dyke *may* be prehistoric. Huge works on that scale often or usually are, and the attachment of a later famous name to a work whose origin is forgotten is common enough. On the other hand, the Welsh also called it "Offa's Dyke." Anyhow, whenever it was made, it was for a boundary between the Welsh mountain men and the low-lying arable land of Britain, which has always been inhabited by a very different race.

Offa's connection with Europe and with Charlemagne is bound up with the name of a far greater Englishman—the greatest Englishman of his time—*Albinus*, also called Alcuin.[1] His position is typical of the dominance of the Church in that re-establishment of Britain, and of the universal European spirit in which the time moved.

Albinus, or Alcuin of York

He was perhaps younger than Offa, but not much—22 years old when Offa came to the throne—a Northumbrian of good birth, born much at the same time that Bede died. He inherited the high culture of the north, which flourished vigorously when its wretched little kingships were dying out in constant murders and intrigues. He had been trained in the famous school at York. He was steeped in antiquity, in the Latin mould, in Vergil. He had from his master [2] probably Hebrew, almost certainly Greek as well—texts of both were in the York library. He travelled, of course, in youth; certainly to France, probably to Rome, whither then travelled all who would know the world. Again, at a date unknown (but between 767 and 778), the Archbishop of York sent him to Rome, in which journey it seems he first met with Charlemagne. At Eanbald's accession to the see in 780 he again goes to Rome, this time to fetch the pallium; in the next year he was asked by Charlemagne to join his court and vigorously help in the revival of learning; in 782 he attached himself to that great name, lived in the Palace at Aix, and thenceforward was the intellectual master of Europe.

It was from this moment also that Offa became prominent in the eyes of Europe. It was about this time that Pope Hadrian suspected him of the plot just mentioned, and later, in 786, that the man to whom he married

European position of Offa

[1] He was called Albinus after that earlier Albinus of the immediately preceding generation, who had been pupil to Theodore of Tarsus, and had founded the brilliant School of York, where the younger Albinus (or Alcuin) was brought up. He was probably a monk, during his active life a deacon in Holy Orders, but perhaps a priest before he died.

[2] Ethelbert, afterwards Archbishop of York.

his daughter, the Winchester king, Brihtric (Beohtric), acceded. This marriage was made in 789, and confirmed Offa's supremacy over the South-West; three years later he married another daughter to the decaying house of York, and he commanded the North, as he already did all the Midlands, East Anglia, Kent, Surrey, and Sussex; East Anglia, indeed, he feared in some way, for he had its little local under-king killed in 794, and the crime made a legend for centuries against Offa's name. The alliance with Beohtric, King in Winchester of Wessex, had this memorable about it, that it exiled from Offa's court a young man, Egbert, of whom posterity was to make at least an equal to, as he was the successor of, Offa.

Egbert of Wessex, his lineage also unknown

This Egbert was the son of some official or under-king in Kent. His lineage—as we have seen with so many of those local leaders—was doubtful enough, but he had sufficient claim to the legendary "Cerdic" ancestry to be a rival to Beohtric (whose own claim was vaguer still—merely a statement that he was "of the right line of Cerdic"). Therefore, on the marriage, Egbert was exiled lest he should claim the Winchester crown. He counted, for he was received at the court of Charlemagne, and there bided his time for thirteen years.

The Council of Chelsea

The great event of all this more glorious end of Offa's reign was the "Contentious Council," the English Legatine Synod (or Synods) of 787: the "Council of Chelsea."

In the preceding year, 786, the Pope had sent to Britain two legates, Theophylact and George, to whom Charlemagne added an abbot of his own. They perambulated the island and summoned that political Church Council which was marked by, apart from a mass of clerical legislation in line with the rest of Christendom, three chief acts: (1) It established a third archbishopric at Lichfield, weakening Canterbury by seven sees and confirming the strength of the midland kingdom: it lasted only a few years (sixteen), till 803; (2) it crowned (or there was crowned in connection with it) Offa's

son, Egferth. That is important. It marks the advent of that *sacramental* idea in kingship which was spreading throughout Europe, and of which later the French monarchy made such play. The idea was that the *crowning* of the heir gave him a mysterious character of lordship which should make his accession secure, and the papal connection with such an act made it more solemn still. Charlemagne, on his vast scale, did just the same thing with his succession ; (3) Offa instituted a payment to Rome from England of about £20 (a mancus) a day,[1] for the services of the Church in the capital of the world. It is notable that the Council was at the pains of having its conclusions translated into the vernacular, and having them read out in " Teutonic " as well as in Latin.

Charlemagne's letter to Offa

The reign concludes with a famous letter written by Charlemagne to Offa in 795 (a year before Offa's death), in which we get a vivid idea both of the position of England in the world before the disaster of the Danish invasions, and of the large scale upon which travel to and from the Continent was conducted, for the burden of the letter is that the passage of pilgrims interfered with Charlemagne's revenues through the presence of merchants, who evaded dues under the cloak of pilgrimage.

What was the real position of Charlemagne towards England ? Probably he thought of himself as holding some vague suzerainty over it when he had come to be suzerain and captain of all Western Christendom. He never issued any formula, however. He never claimed direct authority in his dealings with Offa, or over Egbert after him, and he only once interfered with the island affairs, which was in one of the obscure quarrels of the murderous little Northumbrian

[1] A mancus a day ; and a mancus could, in the nearest measure of values we have, buy an ox. It is worth noting, among other examples of England's full entry into the Roman unity again, that Offa took up Charlemagne's currency, the silver *Denarius*, from which Roman term has descended after the usual erratic changes our word Penny. But of gold coins we have one interesting specimen, a *Mohammedan* denarius (Dinar) stamped with Offa's name.

kinglets of the northern decadence. He was offended by a proposal that his daughter should marry Offa's heir, as something unworthy, and there was a quarrel which for some time closed the Channel ports, but which Alcuin assuaged; but he never, in empty phrase even, stated a claim to direct overlordship upon England.

One last thing must be mentioned before we leave Offa. He lived to see the first warning of the fearful assault of paganism from the North, which, half a lifetime later, came so near to destroying the work of England's recovery. It was after Beohtric had seized the crown of Winchester, but early—perhaps as early as 790, not later than 792—that *the first ships of the Scandinavian pirates came to English land*. It was off the coast of Dorset. There were only three of them—say 200 men at the most—but they landed and killed the local minister of the king. In 793 came a catastrophe. On June 8th of that year the pirates suddenly appeared off the Northumberland coast and took and sacked the Holy of Holies, Lindisfarne. It was this that stupefied Alcuin. He could hardly believe that "such a voyage was possible." It was but one awful stroke. There was a long succeeding peace. But it was an omen of the tempest to come.

First appearance of the Scandinavian pirates, 790-92

They sack Lindisfarne, 793

On July 29th, 796, Offa died.

(B) Egbert: A.D. (796) 802–839—43 Years

Beohtric, King of Winchester, survived Offa, his father-in-law, by six years. So long as he lived Egbert remained abroad in exile. On his death Egbert immediately returned and was admitted without a struggle to Beohtric's place, for the influence of Charlemagne was behind him. He inherited (unwittingly) that unity of England which Offa's power had symbolized, and which he, Egbert, continued. Accession of Egbert, A.D. 802

The little local fightings of Egbert's time is the story of Offa over again: very little recorded, probably that little marking only the checking of spasmodic resistance to his dominant position. As in the case of Offa, there are long gaps in which, during the earlier part of the reign, we have nothing told of him at all, civil, military, or ecclesiastic. Such as it is, here is the brief record. (We must remember that the "darkness of the ninth century" is descending; that the wounds of the pirate invasions followed; and that in their sack of monasteries great masses of documents perished.) Ten years after his accession he must have professed some overt formula of overlordship, for he dates from 812-813 a Latin title of "Ducatus." In 815 the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" (which we can now begin cautiously to trust, for we are within a lifetime of its compilation), shows him fighting all down Cornwall, apparently to its extremity. Such an exception to his overlordship he would not tolerate. He holds a "Concilium" (the English translation of which is "Witan") in 824, and in 825 he again fights the Cornish men who are raiding into Devon. Immediately after he destroys a war-band coming south of Thames from the Midlands under the local king of Mercia, Beornwulf, and we find Kent and Surrey and Sussex and Egbert's petty wars, 824-31

East Anglia all acknowledging him. In 828 he again defeats a Mercian band and takes the final submission of its kinglet. In the next year, 829, he is at the pains of marching north as far as Derbyshire and receiving the formal submission of Northumbria. In 831 he marches into Wales, and has claimed for him the overlordship even of those mountains. It is a meagre list, but it shows his place. He was, even more clearly than Offa (for he was later), the King of one England. And his position shows how the unity of the religious province was forming a national unity. For not this or that petty court (of Winchester or of Repton) is the force at work, but a general unifying tendency into which any chief more prominent than the rest is made to fit as supreme ruler: now a Mercian, then a West Saxon man. Egbert was thus supreme.

But the portent of his reign is its close: the Danes come again, and henceforward continuously, and the great tragedy begins.

The English might have known how much it threatened. All these years were filled with the pirates' harrying of Ireland. But they were few, their actions capricious (they had no idea of a campaign, only of looting and killing like savages, which they were), and they neglected the English shores in all the years between the horror of Lindisfarne and this next blow.

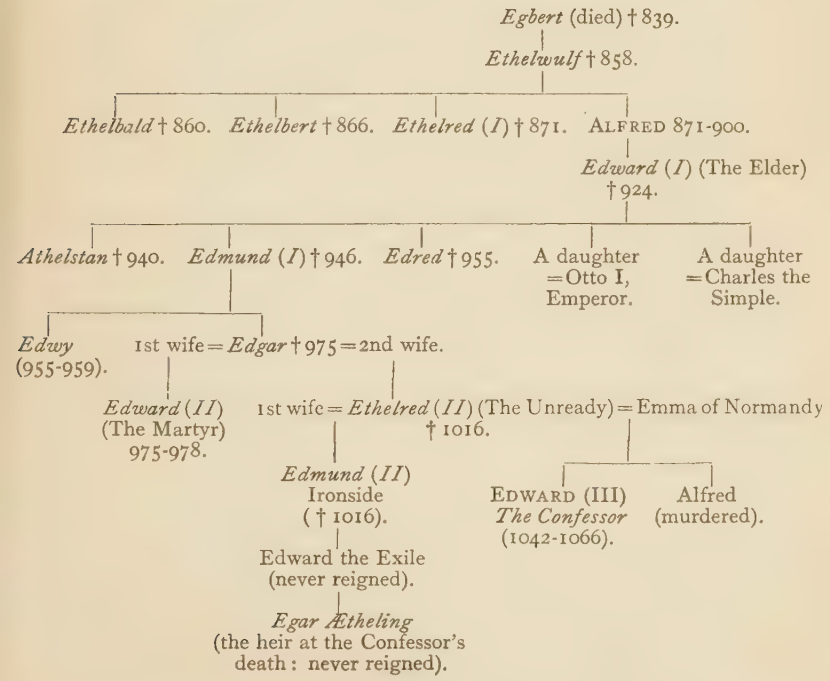
It fell in 835. The robbers of the North Sea raided the Isle of Sheppey in the Estuary of the Thames. In 836 thirty-five of their sail—at the most 2500 men, probably less—appeared off Charmouth, on the Devon borders of Dorset. The fighting men landed, and (it is an example of what the royal "armies" then were) Egbert coming himself could not dislodge them from their position. They re-embarked at will. In 838 the fighting men of a larger Danish fleet—coming it may be from Ireland—united with the Cornish men and marched eastward. The old man (he must have been much nearer seventy than sixty—he had been a serious claimant to power as early as 789) gallantly

The new pirates called "Danes" attack in force, A.D. 835

rode out with his half-trained levy against such novel perils, and on Hingston Down, just over Tamar, an hour or two's marching north from Plymouth Sound, he drove them back and saved what had threatened to be a raid into the heart of the west country. It was his last act before his death in the next year, 839. He left as legacy to his son, Ethelwulf, to his famous grandson Alfred, the dreadful duty of defending Christian England against annihilation and a descent into heathen savagery. The shocks he had himself thus sustained in his old age were but the sparring blows, or contact, of the main assault. It was to fill more than forty years.

Death of Egbert, A.D. 839

From Egbert's reign onwards we can, for the first time since the Romans, draw up a genealogy of island kings (of the House of Winchester) which is trustworthy and free from legend. At this point, therefore, I append a table to illustrate what follows :—

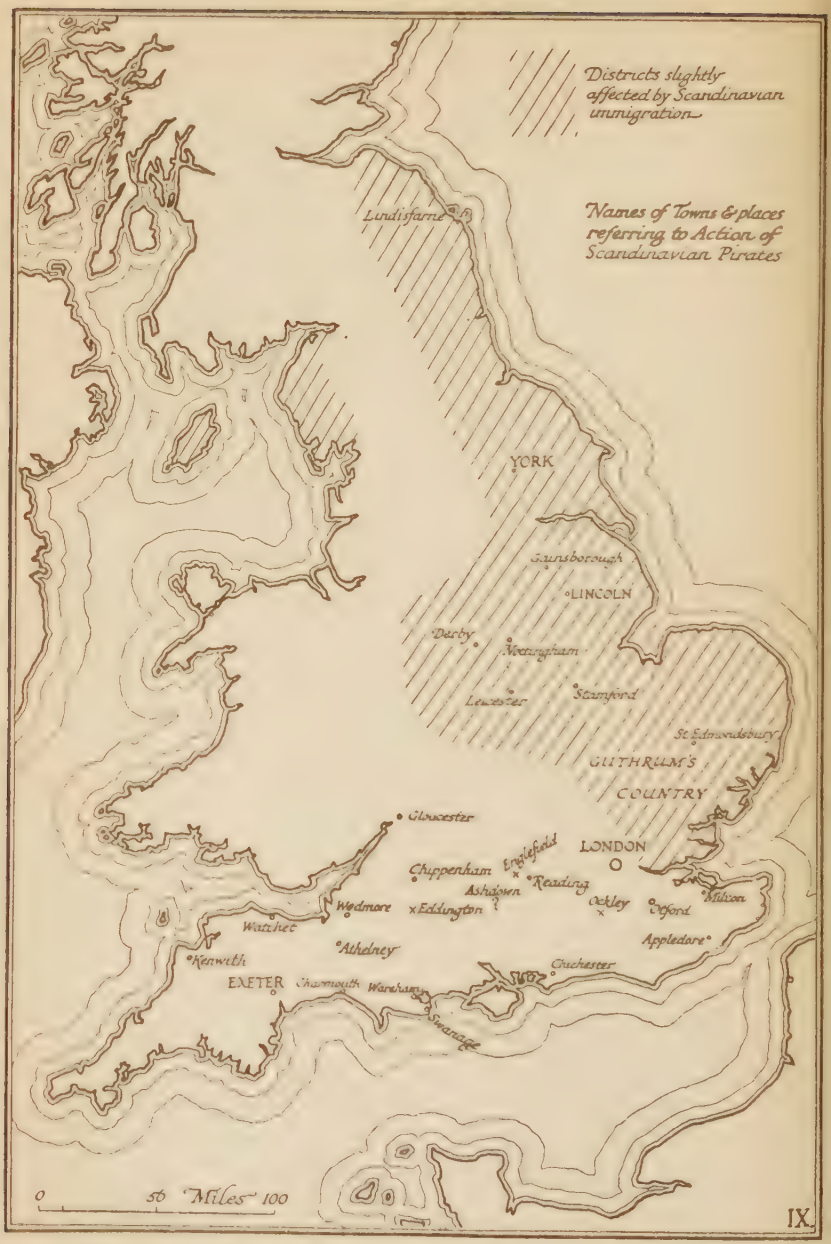

Egbert (died) † 839.
Ethelwulf † 858.
Ethelbald † 860.
Ethelbert † 866.
Ethelred (*I*) † 871.
ALFRED 871-900.
Edward (*I*) (The Elder) † 924.
Athelstan † 940.
Edmund (*I*) † 946.
Edred † 955.
A daughter = Otto I, Emperor.
A daughter = Charles the Simple.
Edwy (955-959).
1st wife = *Edgar* † 975 = 2nd wife.
Edward (*II*) (The Martyr) 975-978.
1st wife = *Ethelred* (*II*) (The Unready) † 1016.
= Emma of Normandy
Edmund (*II*) Ironside († 1016).
EDWARD (III) *The Confessor* (1042-1066).
Alfred (murdered).
Edward the Exile (never reigned).
Egar Ætheling (the heir at the Confessor's death : never reigned).

IV

The Danish Invasions

A.D. 839–A.D. 878

39 Years



POINTS IN THE SECOND, OR SCANDINAVIAN, PIRATE RAIDS ON BRITAIN

IV

THE DANISH INVASIONS

The Great Heathen Onslaught

(A.D. 839–878—39 Years)

TO understand this great crisis in the life of England (and of Europe) it is necessary to grasp three things: (1) the conflict was not racial but religious; (2) the pirates were despised as savages; (3) they were few in number.

First, the struggle against the pirates in Northern Gaul and Britain, that is, Northern France and England (which were the heart of the Christian North), was not a struggle of races, but the defence of a religion and its culture: it was the ultimately successful maintenance of the Catholic civilization against a danger which threatened its overthrow in the North; on the Seine, the Loire, the Thames, and the doubtful new borderland of the Low Countries, the Weser and the Elbe, but lately broken in to Christian order by the blows of Charlemagne's French armies. To *baptize* a pirate leader and his crews was the complete proof of his defeat and absorption into Europe. Victory over him in arms was but the preliminary to this, and without this no victory counted, unless the pirates were exterminated or permanently driven away. Therefore the only serious period of peril is the struggle with the *heathen*. Once the further shores of the North Sea were taught the Mass and letters and all the affair of our civilization, their connection with us, hostile or friendly, dynastic or what not, becomes a totally different thing, and is "within the family."

The struggle essentially one of Christian against pagan

The first phase—the thirty-nine years we are about to follow—is the decisive one, because it was a duel between light and darkness. Christian England might have succumbed.

Alfred, as we shall see, gained, in 878, the victory which made that catastrophe henceforward impossible.

After 878 there is a Christian admixture among the pirates. It grows. At last Scandinavia is largely converted and acts under kings who are, as a rule, baptized. When that state of affairs is reached the final *dynastic* struggle which fills the late tenth and early eleventh century, is quite another matter from the earlier heathen onslaught. It weakens England by introducing perpetual disorder, but it does not destroy tradition.

It is essential to seize this main point. The long later connection between Britain and Scandinavia, partly one of missionary effort from Britain, partly of attack from Scandinavia, partly of dynastic struggle, is often erroneously lumped up together with the original furious mêlée of Christians and heathens which Alfred determined by his victory. It is quite another phase of history. Once the Scandinavians had begun slowly to enter the Christian unity, largely through the efforts of England, our civilization might be maimed and degraded by the imperfect north, but hardly destroyed. Those later struggles did in the long run tend to disintegrate the country politically and to lessen kingship, but no more. They even led to the anarchy and usurpations of Godwin's house. But England was still rich when the Conquest concluded that dangerous chapter.

Secondly, the attackers, the pirates, were at first savages and had no plan. They had no unity. They had no idea of conquest, of crushing others, of imposing themselves, of dominating, and the rest of what goes with a conscious advancing national force. They were merely seeking loot. They had no institutions to plant any more than had the exactly similar pirates who had so nearly destroyed Britain

The pirates were despised savages

during the " Anglo-Saxon " raids of four centuries before. No one in England ever regarded them as equals, let alone superiors. The legend of the Viking (which means " villager "—person from a *vicus* or settlement) as an heroic figure is modern balderdash invented as part of the modern anti-Christian legend. The pirates, until they begin to be of our kin by the touch of Catholicism, are everywhere regarded—however dangerous—as repulsive and inferior.

Thirdly, the pirates of this ninth century, just like those of the " Anglo-Saxon " earlier parallels, were few in number : insignificantly few compared to the millions of Christian England whom they came to loot. The boats were small, with no more perhaps than fifty fighting men each on board, and even much later not more than eighty men [1] on the very largest ships, while the number of boats raiding together was very rarely more than would account of a total band of two to three thousand shields. There may, occasionally, have been one " great " body of five or six thousand ; very rarely indeed do you get a combined body of over 10,000. The reason such small bodies could imperil by land the whole of a great Christian society comprising many millions [2] was the absence in England of a central trained armed force in any form, or even the memory of such a thing. In both England and France the principle of mere local levies was part of the rapid " feudalizing " of Christian society in

They were few

[1] Our evidence for the lesser figure is the size of the boats and the rivers they could ascend ; for the larger one, the fact that eighty is mentioned more than once, *at the end of the development*, as a specially large armed force, even for a royal ship or one belonging to a great leader.

[2] We must bear in mind continually as we read the Dark Ages that we are dealing with a well-populated agricultural England. The charters and other records prove that the villages of that day were of much the same number as in our own, and the arable land much the same, and the methods of agriculture those lasting to the seventeenth century. England and the Lowlands always normally held from six to seven millions. The numbers would fall after a plague or any universal great disaster, but to some such level they would naturally rise again. It is a point continually to be emphasized, for it is one on which the modern itch for belittling the past has especially wounded common-sense.

the lifetime after the death of Charlemagne, that is, the tendency for government and all local life to fall into the hands of the rich men of each district, the lords of most manors in a countryside. That was a note of the later Dark Ages—850-1050—to which I will return. It was heavily emphasized by the chaos of all this ninth century fighting, in the Germanies, in Spain, in Britain, in France. Further, there was no sea force at the disposal of Christendom; for there had not been any need of such a thing for centuries. Armed fleets only begin to appear towards the end of the pirate raids; at their inception a navy was unknown. So the pirates, at first nearly always, afterwards often, escaped if they could get back to their ships. Meanwhile, in a society where most men were serfs, and where wealth and power were gathered up in a few separate important hands, ecclesiastical and noble, mere looting of such owners was of fatal consequence. It broke down the nerve centres. That is why such small pirate bodies acting without plan came so near to ending the whole commonwealth of Christian England.

And there was no fleet to deal with them

These three main truths explain the Danish invasions: why the blows came intermittently, with gaps of a year or two between. Why one district would suffer and another know nothing of the trouble, so that the whole survived. Why we hear of a city "sacked" and yet surviving—for only a random passing horde did the violence. Why, when the pirates settled in a place, they were too few and too incompetent to attempt government, but only took toll, so that their "Danish towns" were mere lingering garrisons of looters. Why in the end, like their forerunners of the fifth century, they accomplished nothing. Why bishoprics, records, towns, continued, though haltingly. Why the raids were so awful, and yet their ultimate effect so slight. Why men travelled, wrote, built, carried on civilization almost as though things were normal, and yet did all things worse and worse under the strain. Why Europe felt a terror and why it did not succumb.

It was not like a man attacked by a wild beast. It was like a man attacked by few but poisonous insects. It was not like a man stricken by a blow. It was like a man stricken by a fœtid air. The baptism, that is, the taming and mastering of the outer inconvenient thing, was Europe's relief, as a man is relieved of malaria by his blood absorbing and digesting the small but virulent thing.

Next, it may be asked, why had we not hitherto heard of pirates from the far north? Why does the peril come so late?

Why these pirates came so late

Why did Scandinavia (all from Trontheim Fjord to the Eider) now thus awake and attack the leaders of mankind, France, and England? Because they were stirred, as a wasp's nest is stirred by a stick. And what stirred them? Charlemagne and his French armies out of Gaul.

These large, soft, light-haired savages had been content for centuries to live in their own waters, paddling about in their shallow open boats along the long calm inland fjords and the sheltered island waters of the Danish and Norwegian straits, "rich (as Tacitus had been humorously told 700 years before when he wrote down notes of the childish North as a savage satire on too-rich Rome [1]) in boats and fighting," but very poor in adventure (save for quarrels among themselves, which only very slowly ceased, even after their baptism), and hopeless in arts and full living. They would have so lain eternally had not the great determination of the Man who led his Gallic armies beyond the Rhine overtaken them, and the failure of his posterity given them their advantage.

When Charlemagne, with his huge French armies, compelled the Saxon confederation—the North Germans—to accept right living (the barbarians defended themselves against massacre and baptism for a lifetime), he roused the last boundaries of the West. The defeated heathen chiefs

[1] It was a tale he had heard of certain "Saiones," who *may* well have been these extreme human beings of the North.

of the Rhine, the Weser, and the Elbe took refuge with the heathen chiefs of Denmark beyond the Eider, and these learnt to fear the advent of discipline, work, and the imposed energy of Christendom. They even reacted against this new pressure of Christendom. It had taught them that there was wealth beyond the seas to be had by theft without working, and the universal lure of the lesser man, the lure of wealth without effort, beckoned them.

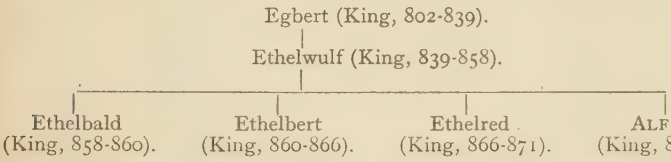
They—first timidly, then more boldly—ran in fine spring weather along the coasts southward to rifle churches, convents, and palaces near the sea. They learnt seamanship under the north-east winds, and put up square sails, clumsily copying the models of the civilized men, as they had long copied, equally clumsily, the metal work and coins of the Roman Empire. But that Empire had weakened, and they were now, proportionately, stronger.

We have seen how their first great booty (greatly daring a night or two at sea) worked the sack of Lindisfarne with a few boats' crews: then Jarrow. Then came long and regular cruises with the ruin of Ireland and the robbery of the Netherlands; then raid after raid upon the waterways of the north and west (even one long prowl into the Mediterranean!). They tried the Humber, the Thames, Southampton Water, the Stour, the Bristol Channel, the Seine, the Loire, the Meuse. As this water-pest spread it clawed inland, and the country-sides began to bleed. The northern heathens learnt to ride, and they stole horses near the coast for forays into the heart of the town lands. They were, to the end, no more than small groups; but their scouring of the country up and down gradually weakened contact between Christian men and the functioning of their institutions. A force able to destroy and bent upon destroying can have an effect quite out of proportion to its numbers. These savages burnt all they could not carry away, and massacred men, women, and little children on principle, from a foul love of cruelty; and such a temper lasted in them for a whole

lifetime, the extreme limits of a long life. The horror of Lindisfarne was in 793. The horror of Coldingham, when the mutilated nuns were burnt alive by the wretched Halfdene, was in 875. These vilenesses would have continued uninterruptedly, and England would have bled to death, had not Alfred three years later won his victory and imposed the beginnings of Catholic culture upon the barbarians.

The main affair, the nearly forty years of incessant fighting, is the story of Ethelwulf and his four sons—all kings.

KINGS OF WESSEX AND OVERLORDS OF ENGLAND



It falls naturally into three divisions: (A) Ethelwulf's reign of 19 years. (B) Those of his three elder sons, 13 years. (C) The first 7 years of Alfred, his fourth son, which end in the decisive victory of Eddington.

(A) Ethelwulf's Reign

(839–858—19 Years)

Ethelwulf's character

Ethelwulf, Egbert's son and successor, was a man whose noble piety and conspicuous character moved all his contemporaries, and who laid the foundations, by incessant activity, of his great heir's achievement. For Alfred's work was made possible by his father's ceaseless warfare.

Ethelwulf, when the storm broke, had no true instrument with which to fight, only untrained levies of the few landed men, and these only roughly organized by shires. That most ancient unit of England, the County (probably immemorial and tribal, and also still more probably Roman), was the nucleus of all action, and it is by shires that the levy of "the men of Dorset," "the men of Wilts," "the men of Hampshire"—that is, the not numerous free landholders available—gather for resistance. The "Comes" is all over Christendom the administrative head of the shire, and has been so everywhere since Europe was fashioned by Rome.[1] Thus it is the Comes of Angers, who fights the pirates in the Sarthe Valley and the Loire, the Comes of the Paris County who defends Paris against them.

and difficulties against the Danes

We have seen how in England the traditional terms of administration were carefully translated by the clerical schools into vernacular equivalents, because the vernacular in England was not popular Latin, as in France, but a close admixture of Celtic, Teutonic, and degraded Latin and Greek words and parts of words. The head of a shire who is "Comes" in a Latin charter or chronicle becomes in an

[1] See p. 161. We have made "Count" out of this word, a corruption of the French "Comte," itself a corruption of the Latin accusative "Comitem."

Anglo-Saxon document "Ealdorman," or "Scirman," or "Gerefa," [1] leader of the hasty county levy.[2]

The struggle opens at once with the accession of Ethelwulf, and is unceasing.

In 840, the very year after his father's death, a squadron of these "Snakes" and "Dragons" [3] came into Southampton Water, landed some thousand or so at the head of it, were defeated by Wulfhere, the Ealdorman of the county, and, going aboard again, seized Portland Bill (perhaps then an island). Ethelhelm, Ealdorman of Dorset, met them, staved them off, but was killed. The pirates in Southampton Water, A.D. 840

The next year again, 841, a gang of them appears in the Wash to raid Lincolnshire. The Comes of Lincolnshire, Herebright, was killed and his levy destroyed, and the band of robbers turned south, raiding the coasts of Norfolk and Suffolk and Kent. in the Wash, A.D. 841

And the next year again, 842, they loot both sides of the sea, Étaples in Picardy, Rochester in Kent. They even attack London. And in that year (at Étaples certainly, and probably at London and Rochester) a precedent appeared. *Money was paid to these pirates as the price of their departure.* in the Thames and Medway, A.D. 842

Next year again, 843, they land on the Dorset beach at Charmouth. Ethelwulf met them himself, as his father Egbert had done on the same spot, and with the same result. The raiders were checked and could not get inland; but in Dorset, A.D. 843

[1] These titles are excellent examples of the two main sources whence what are called "Teutonic" tongues arise: the original barbaric German and the debased Latin now adopted in the German tribes, and filtering northward. "Ealdor-man" is purely German. "Gerefa" is possibly a corruption of "Gravitas." "Scir-man" is half and half: "scir" a county, is debased Latin. "Man" is German. Of "Scir-gerefa" we have made "scir-reeve," and then sheriff.

[2] It was called the "Fyrd" of the county—another example of what a mixture the vernacular dialect of Winchester was. "Fyrd" is probably an aboriginal word. It is only doubtfully connected with later Germanic words.

[3] So the pirates called their long ships, and the two names again prove the way in which Mediterranean civilized words had worked up northward and mixed inextricably with the original savage tongues. "Snake" is original to the North, but "Dragon" (Dreakka) is the Greek Δρακων.

they could not be destroyed, for the English levies were too small, and the savages re-embarked at will. That winter, for the first time, a part of the heathens stayed over winter in Christendom (on the island of Noirmoutier, at the mouth of the Loire)—an ominous novelty.

For eight years there is a lull in the capricious swarming of the Scandinavians. They were looting elsewhere, up the Garonne and other continental rivers; a really large force of 20,000 or more sacked and burnt that great port and bishopric of Hamburg which Charlemagne had founded as an outpost, and which challenged the heathen darkness beyond. During this short respite England has only two short acquaintances with the Danes. Some ship's crew or other kills an obscure kinglet of the extreme north (one Fredwulf), and an attempted landing at the mouth of the Parret in the Bristol Channel is beaten off.

Eight years' respite for England,

It was in 851 that the first attack on a large scale took place, the first which involved a campaign.

The earliest warnings of this were a raid on Devonshire and then one on Kent—both easily thrust back. During the second the pirates were attacked at sea and lost nine ships, but the large affair came after, in the summer of the year. A serious force (for such small warfare), a force more than half that which had sacked Hamburg six years before, 350 ships of war—perhaps 15,000 shields—sailed into the Estuary of the Thames. The fighting men landed and sacked Canterbury, re-embarked, went up-tide to London, ravaged it, and, for the first time in all these years, trusting in their numbers, ventured a long march inland.

then great attacks on London, A.D. 851

The great Roman road to the south lay before them over the Bridge, past the wealth of the royal villa at Merton, and on to Chichester, Bosham, and the ports of the Channel. They did not know that it was broken on the clay of the weald; their column had advanced two days' march and part of a third when their fate overtook them.

The pirates march down Stane St.

The earlier fighting in Kent and the looting of London

had given time for a full army, not a mere county levy, to be gathered, and it is the glory of Ethelwulf, that great leader, that he was the first in England to gather such a host.

There is a road leading from the west eastward, as old as anything in Britain, still to be traced, and in parts still used as a highway. It runs from Winchester to Canterbury, and is called to-day "The Pilgrims' Way," from the later Canterbury pilgrimages. No other road passable to an army led from the Winchester district, the heart and rallying place of Wessex, eastward, between the direct Roman road to London by Staines and the south coast line of arable land; for the wealden clay and forest forbade any such work to those early times. It was—it can only have been—by this road that Ethelwulf's great body of levies came up eastward against the Danes.

Ethelwulf marches to meet them up the Pilgrim's Way

This old road cuts the Roman road to the straits at Dorking. The Danes had overshot that point, and were already at Ockley [1] when the English force arrived and cut off their retreat to their ships on the Thames. Under those conditions, which compelled the barbarians to fight the first serious army ever brought against them, the battle was joined and the English victory was complete: the heathen force was destroyed in a fashion which resounded throughout Europe. What remnant of them got off, by what route, to their fleet we do not know. But the crews *may* have wintered [2] in some island of the Thames Estuary. At any rate, the great battle left all the rest of Ethelwulf's reign free from

and destroys them at the Battle of Ockley in Surrey, A.D. 851

[1] The modern sceptical itch against tradition and common sense has led to doubt even on so notorious a site as this. Sir Charles Oman, among others, wants an obscure and impossible Oakley in Hampshire, pleading that Ockley is "far from any road." It is right against the crossing of the two chief roads of Surrey, and stands right on a Roman causeway!

[2] The entries are confusing. The "Chronicle" gives the first wintering at Thanet in 851, and again, by some error (it is full of errors), in 855, in Sheppey. Asser gives 855 and Sheppey, not Thanet. The point is not important, and cannot be settled. There was no fighting. We must remember that both "Chronicle" and Asser are a lifetime later.

danger, and England recovered during a respite of seven years. The only slight trouble was a sharp skirmish in Thanet (two county *Comites* were killed, but there was no raid).[1]

Another lull of seven years

Those last seven years were well filled. In 853 Ethelwulf, who had always kept up an active relation with Rome, with one embassy after another, sent his younger child, his fourth surviving son, who was to be the great Alfred, to have the blessing and unction of Leo IV. He was but four years old. The Pope gave the little boy the sacramental regal unction, took him "for a spiritual child," put on him a little belt and little robes to invest him "consul of the city:" a fine omen of what was to come.

Alfred, Ethelwulf's little son, is sent to Rome, A.D. 853

In 855 Ethelwulf made some great donation to the Church, on which masses of critical discussion have settled nothing, so vague is the phrasing. All we can say is that it was a *tithe* of something—probably of his own private manors. Having done this, he took advantage of the peace to start upon a long-desired and long-planned pilgrimage to Rome. He took with him little Alfred—now just in his seventh year—and the child received once more that unforgettable vision of the City and of the central court of Christendom.

Ethelwulf himself goes to Rome with Alfred, A.D. 855

Returning marries Judith, the Emperor's daughter, October, 856

The King of England was away eighteen months. His first wife—Alfred's mother—was dead. He made, as he returned, one of those diplomatic alliances which seem so strange to us, and were so natural to our fathers. Charles the Bald, Charlemagne's grandson, received him in the court of France and entertained him as a great king. Ethelwulf took his daughter Judith for wife, obviously as a sign of alliance: she was legally nubile, in her thirteenth year, but it is hardly to be held that the contract was more than formal. It led, however, to difficulty in England.

[1] There is an obscure allusion to "Heathen Men in the land of the Wrokenseatas," in a charter of 855. But it is not possible to give it a meaning. There were certainly no Danes raiding near the *Wrekin*. Perhaps there was a settlement of prisoners, though even that is a far-fetched explanation.

The marriage ceremony had been held at Verberie (the French royal manor on the Oise below Compiegne) on the 1st of October, 856. Ethelwulf was back in England before the end of the year, but he found a conspiracy on foot to deprive him of the throne, and to set up his eldest son, Ethelbald. Eanwulf, the *Comes* of Somerset, was the author of it, with the Bishop of Sherborne. The bulk of the nobles were indignant, and supported the king as a matter of course, but Ethelbald had a party, and his father, now elderly and perhaps willing to retire, avoided civil war. He left the West to Ethelbald, seated at Winchester (obviously as his father's deputy), and spent the last two years of his own life over Kent, Essex, and Sussex. He had the sense to enthrone by his side this child-wife of his, thereby avoiding friction with the far more important monarchy of Charles, and he did so notwithstanding an odd custom of about sixty years' standing, that the wife of a Wessex king should be consort only, not queen—it dated from an attempt on Beohtric's life by his wife, Offa's daughter.

Divides his kingdom with his eldest son, Ethelbald, A.D. 857

He died towards the end of 858, leaving a will consonant to his fine character, making moderate but ample provision for charity, and renewing Offa's gift of yearly mancuses (but 300, not 365) for the service of the apostolic churches in Rome.

and dies, A.D. 858

(B) Ethelwulf's Three Elder Sons

(858-871—13 Years)

The physical taint in Egbert's descendants

Ethelwulf left four living sons: in order of seniority, Ethelbald, Ethelbert, Ethelred, and the youngest, Alfred. Ethelwulf himself died too young—in the early fifties. His sons died quite young—all of them except Alfred—and Alfred died at fifty-one, and was a man perpetually suffering. But the taint of abnormality, whatever it was, which rendered the three elder brothers insignificant, turned in Alfred to singular and separate genius.

Ethelbald's accession, 858

He marries his father's widow

Ethelbald's name is hardly worth recording, for he did not reign two years, and we have no record of it, save his successful attempt to marry his father's widow. His excuse, perhaps, was that the marriage at Verberie was but a formality; none the less, the uproar following on his bad record of rebellion made him odious: Judith was now fifteen—and a baggage. When Ethelbald died, her father Charles, to stop the scandal, had her sent back to France, and put her into a convent. She did not stay there long.[1]

His brother Ethelbert succeeds two years later (A.D. 860)

The pirates at Winchester, A.D. 860

Ethelbert succeeded at once, and his accession (in 860) marks the renewal of the pirate anarchy. He only lived six years, but that short reign opened and ended with tumult. In the very first year, 860, a large body of pirates looted Winchester itself, coming in a day's march from Southampton

[1] She got out and allowed herself to be carried away by the *Comes* of Flanders, whose family, descended from Charlemagne, in the growing feudalism, became internally independent before the end of the century. Their descendants were that powerful House of Flanders of the tenth and eleventh century, which gave the Conqueror a wife and King Stephen to England, and perpetually intermixed with English affairs under the Confessor.

Water. Happily they lost heavily, as the *Comites* of Hampshire and Wiltshire came up with their levies in time to drive the heathens back aboard. In Ethelbert's last year, 865, there opened that last determined and prolonged effort on the part of the heathens which so nearly ended the life of England as a province of Christian civilization, and so nearly pushed us back into savagery. Their last effort opens, A.D. 865

Had it succeeded there would have been no recovery. The ninth century had not the momentum of the sixth. The Roman power was too far gone, the tradition of the Empire too nearly exhausted. There would have been no such renewal of civilization as St. Augustine began. It would have been the end.

The first body landed in Thanet, were bought off from Canterbury by a promised payment, but ravaged Kent. They wintered in Thanet—this time we are sure of the date and the place—and the next spring, that of 866 (after the king had died), a much larger body than had appeared since Ockley descended upon East Anglia. They were the "Great Army," and their leaders were "the sons of Ragnar," the two vilest names of that vile time—Ingwar and Hubba. They winter in Thanet, and ravage East Anglia, A.D. 866

Ingwar and Hubba, sons of Ragnar

We find much later a legend or tradition of the North which we may take or leave. It is the story that Ragnar Lodbrok—a pirate chieftain of the generation before—had been wrecked on the Northumberland coast, and that his English captors put him to death in a pit of serpents; he prophesied that his sons, "the cubs of the boar," would avenge him.

The "Great Army"—we do not know its number, but perhaps, before its losses, 10,000 or more—marched boldly up country, away from the sea.

There was in East Anglia in those days a kinglet called Edmund, vaguely said to be "of royal stock." We know no more of him than that. He had been put at the head of the two shires, Norfolk and Suffolk, as a boy of fifteen, through some obscure arrangement of the local lords.

He paid ransom to the heathens. They wintered ashore (with their boats in the deep rivers of the Broads?), they seized horses and mounted themselves. With the next year, 867, quite early they went suddenly north and surprised York.

They seize horses, A.D. 867

It was a town walled but not strong. The two wretched kinglets of Northumbria, who were, as usual, fighting among themselves, united and laid siege to the city. It was the 21st of March, 867. The English broke in, but they were overwhelmed in the street fighting, both their leaders were killed, one in battle, the other with abominable tortures as a prisoner,[1] and, with the capital, all Northumbria submitted. North of Tyne three successive small chieftains ruled as vassals of the heathen for ten years, and then the kingdom ended.

and hold York

It was a tremendous event. For the first time in Christendom heathen men, savages, were in active and apparently permanent power over civilized men.

Northumbrian kingdom ended

All this time Ethelred, the third surviving son of Ethelwulf, lay in the south, not yet moving. He was a respected man, a good leader, and, like his father, devoted to the religion which sustained England. But Mercia lay between, and his vassal of Mercia was only preparing to move. He hoped, perhaps, if a battle could be forced, he would repeat his father's deed at Ockley, and destroy the "Great Army." The next year, 868, his opportunity seemed to have come. He joined up with his vassal of Mercia (Burhed), taking with him as *Secondarius* or colleague, and second in command, the young and impetuous Alfred—now nineteen years old—and when the sons of Ragnar, marching up Trent southward, had reached Nottingham, the combined English levies were before them.

Ethelred, third son of Ethelwulf, now king, marches north against them, A.D. 868

But the heathens refused battle. They stood a siege in Nottingham, and a whole season went by without the

[1] This was one Aella. The barbarians cut open his back and pulled his lungs through the wound.

place falling. What might have been a decisive action in the open ended in an armistice: the Danes to lie quiet all winter and to withdraw (which they did) in the spring of 869. They had not lost the North.

Nottingham armistice of 869

In 870 they came down again into East Anglia, ruining all upon their way. They crossed the Humber in the summer, burnt the great Abbey of Bardney in Lincolnshire; before autumn they crossed the Witham and destroyed the county levy under its *Comes*, Algar, who fought desperately, but went down surrounded. All the English fighting there were killed. The pirate band then fell on the venerable, the holy wealth and splendour of Croyland; the young monks fled across the water, the old men and the boys of the monastery took sanctuary in the church. The heathen butchered them all, save one child, who escaped. They killed the abbot at the altar, they pursued the unhappy men through the passages and cells of the great place, running everywhere with blood, and filled it with foul and useless murders. They burnt the whole of the vast buildings wantonly, and passed on to Medeshamstede. There the serfs and freemen of the fields tried pitifully to save their shrine, and Ingwar was wounded. Hubba avenged that wound by killing all the women and little children huddled in the church, and murdering with his own hands for his private delight the abbot with his eighty-four brethren. Next the heathens sacked and burnt Huntingdon; then the great Convent of Ely.

The pirates ravage all East Anglia, A.D. 870

This was a place of refuge, thought secure in the fens, crowded with treasure and holding the daughters of the great eastern lords. The heathens raped, then massacred, then burnt all.

They were come to East Anglia again, and that young king, Edmund hopelessly came out to meet them with his band. It was destroyed at Hoxon, on the Waveney, and Edmund taken. They would have spared him as a vassal, but he would not serve heathen men. These, therefore, the

Martyrdom of St. Edmund

Sons of Ragnar, stripped him and tied him to a tree, cut his body with whips and had arrows shot at him, like St. Sebastian, missing all vital parts of set purpose. They ended by beheading the martyr, and his body lay, for generations onwards, incorruptible in the great shrine of St. Edmundsbury. Then Essex was overrun, it seems, and all the land north and east of London was lost to kingly and Christian rule.

It was with the next year, 871, that a final stroke was attempted and Wessex attacked.

The pirates attack Wessex from Reading, A.D. 871

In that year, 871, the "Great Army" concentrated at Thetford under a third son of Ragnar, Halfdene, then marched rapidly to the south-west and stockaded the triangle of land at Reading, between Kennet and Thames, digging a ditch from stream to stream. This they made their base, and then they were reinforced by new arrivals from oversea. It was early in the year, some weeks before Easter.

They were attacked at once. That *Comes* of Hampshire who had driven the pirates back aboard from Winchester eleven years before was now nominated to Berkshire, and, as *Comes* of that shire, led his fyrd against a raiding party of the heathens that had ridden out to Englefield (between four and five miles west of their stockade), and drove it back, killing the "Jarl" who led it.[1] That was three days after the seizure of Reading. Before the week was out Ethelred and Alfred came up with the main force and tried to storm the stockade, but failed and lost the *Comes* of Berkshire in the repulse. The Christians retired a day's march west under the downs towards Wantage. Four days later the pagans came out in force, and the second great battle of these wars was engaged.

[1] "Jarl" was the Scandinavian title of a subsidiary leader. There were five such with Halfdene at Reading. Our title of Earl is oddly derived from this name. One of the very few fossil remains of the Danish piracies. The Englefield in question has been muddled up in some histories (e.g. The Oxford "History of England") with Englefield Green, miles away beyond Windsor.

The heathen had an advantage of position, standing higher. The Christian drew up below. Where the exact site may be is not known, but it was somewhere on the Ashdown ridge above the Vale of the White Horse, and to the east of that antiquity. There is a fine story of Ethelred hearing Mass in his tent as the battle lines were being formed, and "refusing while he had breath in him to leave the divine for any human thing." But young Alfred thought the few minutes' delay too many, and took over the line, a dense mass of shields.

Are defeated at Ashdown

It was he, with the Christians, who charged in spite of the disadvantage of ground, he leading *aprico more* ("like a wild boar"). As the charge struck, Ethelred ran up, his Mass over, and joined the press, calling loudly "on the Lord of this great world." As at Ockley, the victory was complete, the heathen line broke, and there was a rout, pursued all through the night to the stockade, behind which Halfdene and the remnant of his force found safety.

Reinforcement reached him. He made, in a fortnight, a sortie and fought, indecisively, at Basing, a day's march off; then another, with the main Christian body, at some uncertain spot given to us as "Meratun," also indecisive.[1]

Ethelred, some days after this last battle, died and was buried in haste at Wimborne. He left two sons, children; but Alfred, now most famous, was called to lead by the universal voice of his people.

Ethelred dies, Alfred his youngest brother succeeds, A.D. 871

[1] One guess is Marden, near Hungerford. But that is 20 miles off—too long a march.

(C) Alfred (to 878)

(871–878—7 Years)

There are some great men worthy of their legend; Alfred is one. He had a strangeness which separated him out from his fellows. All men noted him. He was courageous, yet also intelligent. Passionate, yet taught by himself to ride himself on the curb. Always suffering, yet always active. This singular genius was blessed with achievement. He north of the Channel, and the Count of Paris to the south of it, between them saved Europe.

Alfred's marriage and character

They had married him (to a woman who makes no figure in history) at nineteen: in the year when he had ridden with his brother Ethelred to Nottingham, on his first command. On his wedding day he was struck with that mysterious malady which haunted all his life. It gave him grievous pain continually. None knew its source or character. He was never free from it.

His first years were wild. He sacrificed women to his chance appetite, and spent his manhood in remorse for it. He had all his family's flaming love of the Catholic Church, and that informed by his eager, constructive mind. He

His zeal for Latin

held fast to the all-importance of the sacred Latin tongue, custodian of Europe, and restored it when the tradition of it was in peril through the heathen ravages and burnings of books and murder of the gentry and the learned. He had been held by the heel like Achilles: from a baby he had been steeped in Rome.

. . . . . .

He gives the first hint of Danegeld

The first act of Alfred was to initiate a policy of which he later made a regular precedent—appearing in a formal

treaty. He paid levy to the pirates. He bought peace. We have seen that local authorities had done this long before. But Alfred's was the first government so to act. He was the first head of England to give the invaders gold as the price of their peace—what was later called "Danegeld." He had suffered defeat in an attack from superior numbers at Wilton Hill, by Salisbury. He purchased the retirement of the heathens from Wessex back to the ruined eastern lands. It was bad policy. They gave Alfred's own home kingdom of Winchester four years' respite, but they destroyed its last vassal, for they marched—after a rest in London—to Repton, the sacred burial-place of the Midland chiefs. They burnt the famous church and convent, and wantonly desecrated the graves of all those kings. They compelled Burhed, an old man of long reign over the Mercians, to resign, and he went off to die at Rome, where men buried him in the Saxon College or hostel.[1] His wife, who had followed him, never saw his grave. She died in the lovely valley of Bellinzona, after the crossing of the St. Gothard Pass, and under the Italian sun. So ended Mercia and the memory of Offa's greatness.

The pirates drive out Burhed, King of Mercia

He dies at Rome

The pagans put up a local servant of their own to call himself Kinglet of Mercia as long as they chose, and made him take oath to be at their bidding; the Midlands had followed the way of the North and were under heathen rule: the rule of a few only, but armed and abominably cruel. The heathens even ordered the mints to strike coins for them and their English servants, and copied old Roman models of coins for themselves. In 876 Halfdene went north to spoil what was left of Northumbria from sea to sea—its last kings disappeared. The other half of the heathen band went south under a leader, Guthrum, and tried the final issue with Alfred and Wessex. The climax of the drama had come.

The pirates put up a puppet king over Mercia

The place of Guthrum's concentration was Cambridge.

[1] "Schola" is a word that gradually changed its meaning, in this connection as in a dozen others.

They attack Wessex, A.D. 877

He and his group came right south and suddenly seized *Wareham* in Dorset before their movements were known. It was fortified by them and well chosen. It stands up river from Poole Harbour in a tongue between two streams, like Reading, and in the heart of Wessex. Guthrum had also got the "Western Danes"—those of the Irish Sea presumably—to promise him aid. Alfred laid siege at once. The invested pagans held out and at last treated, promised to retire for pay, swore solemn oaths, even gave hostages; and then the mounted of them stole out by night, rode hard to Exeter, surprised it, and held out *there*. Alfred followed and again besieged them *there*, leaving a force, it must be supposed, to watch those left in Wareham.

In this siege of Exeter first appears Alfred's use of armed ships. They were but few, and manned by foreign mercenaries, but they had effect. The Danes at Wareham organized a relief of Exeter. They went aboard and out of Poole Harbour in a great fleet, struck a gale and piled up 120 of their ships in Swanage Bay, with the loss of all their crews and armed men. The remnant attempted to come up the Exe to Exeter, but were blocked off Exmouth by Alfred's ships with their hired foreign crews. The Danes in Exeter, besieged for months, at last surrendered on condition they might go off unmolested out of Wessex. It was August, 877.

Hold Exeter, are besieged and capitulate

but organize in the North

The heathens spent the rest of the year 877, in organizing something like a settled domination over Northern and Eastern England. Few as they were in numbers, they had destroyed the Northumbrian line of kings, the East Anglian line of kings. They had made a humble vassal of the Mercian kinglet, set up by themselves. They would never, of course, have founded a realm, for they were barbarian and could not organize. But they could enjoy a temporary wealth in the process of destroying civilization, and wealth was their object. First they had it by loot; when that was exhausted they could propose to levy taxes and gather

rents off lands. Hence the rough government at York by Halfdene and the separate "Jarls," each with his armed followers, in the Midland towns, especially what were later called the "Five Burhs," Lincoln, Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, and Stamford. They took over all Mercia east of the Watling Street, leaving their subject English "King of Mercia" to govern the western part alone—the basins of the Severn and the Dee—but with their armed men present at will there also.

especially in "The Five Danish Boroughs"

This, then, was the situation at the end of 877. The few thousand of armed pagans had begun the destruction of civilization in all Northern and Eastern and most of Midland Britain. They had burnt the great centres of wealth and teaching, the monasteries. They held the towns with garrisons, small, but fully terrorizing the Christians. They had begun to confiscate the rentals and the taxes. Soon the people would have lost their Latin tradition and their clerical cement. The Mass would have become rarer and rarer until it was forgotten. Letters would have perished. Then building and all the arts.

The final peril of England

These few, virulent, destroyers would have done to all England what the few destroyers of 400 years before had done to the east coast fringe: so wounded a solid society that it lapsed into heathen darkness.

South of Thames and Avon, that is, in Wessex, there had been raids and heavy fighting, but no occupation and no great destruction as yet. Each effort against this, the richest part of the island, had failed: after each the heathens had retired. But Wessex was exhausted. The comparatively small land-owning class which did the fighting (serfs who tilled the land were not summoned) had lost heavily, and the example and terror of the north and east was vividly present in men's minds.

To loot Wessex, the last reservoir of undisturbed wealth, and to settle in its towns and grasp its revenues, was the obvious temptation present to the pagans.

They prepare to loot Wessex

Guthrum by land and Hubba by sea

Guthrum had fixed his army that autumn and winter of 877 at Gloucester: the junction of the two Roman roads, the crossing place of the Severn, just on the Wessex borders. Hubba with a fleet was on the coast of South Wales, down the water.

It is an advantage the savage always has over the civilized man (when weapons are equal) that he has a lower standard of life, and can support physical evils which an old culture cannot bear. The same difference which makes the cultured land worth looting to the savage, also gives him this help of Nature.

It will have been noticed that the Danes opened their fighting seasons much earlier than the English had done in their older Mercian, Northumbrian, and Wessex wars. All the Lincolnshire and Norfolk fighting, which ended in St. Edmund's martyrdom, had been in March, and even late February. All the Reading fighting with Guthrum had been March fighting. After this autumn of 877, acting from Gloucester and South Wales, the pagans effected a surprise. They opened their attack upon Wessex in the depth of winter—a thing hitherto unknown.

Hubba attacks Bideford river early January, 878

while Guthrum seizes Chippenham just afterwards

It was at the end of the Christian feast of Christmas, just after Twelfth Day, 878—say January 10th or so—that the blow fell. Hubba crossed the Bristol Channel with his twenty-three ships and some 1200 men, going right over past Lundy for Bideford river and the bar of what is to-day Appledore.[1] Guthrum left Gloucester, marched straight to Chippenham, and there entrenched.

Many English nobles fly oversea

The sudden move, coming after the strain of so many years, broke the nerve of Wessex. Nobles submitted. Tribute was paid. Armed gatherings scattered, and many fled oversea. Alfred alone, with a small group of his court, took refuge in a steading on one of the two sharp, very small, isolated rounds of higher land above the marshes, where the Tone and the Parret meet, and where there was

[1] *Aber-dour* (Celtic) = the mouth of the river.

foothold and security. He entrenched or stockaded it. One of these was and is called "Athelney," the "noble island." [1]

Alfred retires to Athelney

At the threat of Hubba's invaders—though they were but 1200—Odda, the *Comes* of Devonshire, took refuge with his armed men in a stockade at Kenwith, just north of Bideford, and close to the sea and river. There Hubba besieged him, trusting to famine and lack of water for a surrender. Odda and his men made a sortie at dawn, killed most of the pagans (840 or 860 out of 1200) and Hubba himself. The remnant fled to their ships.[2] The sacred Raven Banner of the pagans was taken, which Ragnar's daughters had woven, and which gave omen of victory or defeat by flapping or hanging still.

Hubba is defeated January, 878

This was the first success. The next was Alfred's rallying of the three counties. He sent out after Easter (March 23rd, 878) messages to summon a gathering of the men free to fight in the Fyrds of Wilts, Somerset, and Hants. The Dorset men failed him. The concentration was at the "County Stone," "Egbert's Stone," where Somerset, Wilts, and Dorset meet, just at the southern end of Selwood Forest.[3] It was early May, just on Whitsuntide, and "they were as glad to greet him as one risen from the dead." They marched straight for Chippenham, Guthrum's camp, and met the advancing pagans near Eddington, under or upon Bratton Down, beyond Westbury. There Alfred won

Alfred appears, rallies the three counties (Wilts, Somerset, and Hants), and defeats the Danes at EDDINGTON, Whitsuntide, 878

[1] It was either Athelney itself on the Tone, or "King Alfred's Fort," a mile and a half down river. Probably the latter, for the word "Athelney" applies to the district, and the latter is the better defence by far. Both are on the ancient causeway crossing the marshes from Glastonbury to the west. The one is an outpost of the other. Perhaps he used both: stationing himself at Athelney but garrisoning the "Fort" as an outpost.

[2] I take it that the traditional number, 1200, related originally to the tota figure, not the counted dead. Kenwith is the traditional site, and all the arguments brought against it are academic and futile, based on the idea that tradition is always false. The original name (old British) was "Cynnit"; Latin, *Cunetio*.

[3] It stood to almost within living memory in Penselwood Parish, a third of a mile east, and a little north, of the church.

the decisive battle of these long wars: decisive, not because he won a complete victory—that his father had also done at Ockley, and he and his brother again at Ashdown—and yet all had to be done all over again—but *because he so negotiated as to impose terms of baptism on the heathens and so change all the character of the invasion.*

and ends the great peril by imposing baptism on them

The pagan host was broken and fled to Chippenham. All stragglers in the rout were cut down, all cattle and horses left outside the stockade were captured, and Alfred sat down before the place, blockading it. Guthrum held out a fortnight, then, from lack of food and fuel, he surrendered at mercy. The King of England made what terms he would, took what hostages pleased him, and imposed baptism. Three weeks later Guthrum, with thirty of his chiefs, came to a manor near Athelney to meet the king. Alfred gave him the Christian name of Athelstan, as a symbol of the man's entry into civilized life, stood godfather to him, and led him to the royal manor of Wedmore, a day's march off, under the Mendips. It was mid-June. In another week the *solutio chrismatis*, that is, the ritual undoing of the sacramental fillets, was performed at Wedmore. For twelve days more the new Christians were feasted and loaded with presents. They went home and led their men to Cirencester, beyond the Wessex border.

Guthrum and his chiefs are baptized at Wedmore, June, 878

This was the turning-point. There was plenty of later fighting. The Scandinavian ships sought England continually. It was long before the heathens of the midland and northern garrisons were all of the Faith. But with Wedmore the pressure of destruction ended. The incorporation of the northern barbarians with Christendom had begun, and the English culture was saved.

and England is saved

Alfred was thirty years of age.

The peace which Alfred negotiated with Guthrum, and which posterity generally calls the "Treaty of Wedmore," [1] was no more than a recognition of two things—one that

[1] There is a theory that the pact as we have it was of rather later date: 886.

Guthrum—now under the Christian name of Athelstan—should not attempt power west of a line drawn up the river Lea to Watling Street, and so to Stony Stratford and the Ouse Crossing; the other that he should sincerely accept the Catholic Faith and practice and act as a Christian chief of a Christian district—that is, that he and his men should be absorbed into English culture. If the terms are of 878, they took some time to settle down, for there was land fighting in and round London as late as 885, and also sea fighting between Alfred's ships and Guthrum's off the Essex coast. But the main lines stood; Essex and East Anglia were Christianly ruled, and Guthrum, under his Christian name of Athelstan, struck coins in honour of St. Edmund himself.

Feudalism

While this perpetual harrying of England by pirate bands was going on, while the later dynastic struggle was proceeding, and during the interval of peace between, England, though thus turned northward, shared in the general social change which marked the last phase of the Dark Ages, A.D. 850-1000.

These two centuries were essentially the full appearance, the maturing, of *Feudalism:* a social system in which local lords of villages became petty rulers; their superiors in wealth, the lords of many villages, political superiors as well: the greatest of all, owners over a wide district, tending to become virtually independent sovereigns, only in title inferior to the Crown. The system had very old roots. It went back to the military tenure of land in the fourth and even the third centuries, and was growing under the surface of society right on till the eighth. But it was not until the weakening of administration and of all culture under the pagan and Mohammedan blows of the central Dark Ages that it appeared as an open, permanent, and unquestioned political system. Hence you have in England the great

Earldoms—three or four to the whole island; in France (whence all social movements originate for the West) the great feudal provinces, with their courts much more independent than the earldoms of England, the Duke of Normandy at Rouen, the Duke of Aquitaine at Poitiers. Men had begun to think of all political power as a personal bond between superior and inferior, and of all rule, even in villages, as hereditary. The Roman slave, whom the Church half-emancipated into a *serf*, grew under feudalism to be a small farmer, secure of his *hereditary* acres, but under conditions of service or (later) payment. He had his *lord* (of his village), that lord an overlord—and so forth. The Crown was but the titular summit of a pyramid of such personal links of homage and duty by blood.

England differed and had some special character of her own; though the difference between England and the Continent during the Catholic centuries is absurdly exaggerated in most modern history, it must be recognized. This island south of the border was not large enough for fixed and half-independent provinces to arise, such as were Flanders, Normandy, Brittany, across the sea. The king was more present everywhere, and could constantly raise a national force. Further, England had been more battered than France, and tended more to lose culture under the two great separate epochs of Scandinavian fighting, the first pirate raids and the dynastic struggle. The interval of comparative peace between these epochs raised culture somewhat, but not sufficiently; and though the wealth of England at the end of the whole affair, just before the Norman Conquest, was still remarkable, the level of building, of the arts in general, of writing, of the whole Latin tradition, was lowered. But the *general* effect of the Dark Ages was present everywhere, and England was not sharply differentiated from the rest.

Now the chief social effect of what has been called "the Feudal undergrowth" was not the weakening of central

power—though that was an evil—*it was the corruption and degradation of ordinary parochial religion and of the episcopal system above it.* The lay power encroached. The discipline of unity relaxed, and the Church grew degraded. Priests often lived with women, even married. Bishoprics were purchased, or even passed by heredity. The whole tradition of ecclesiastical order was imperilled. But very early in the process a reaction arose from within : it was led by monastic centres—and especially by Cluny. The second half of the tenth century (950-1000) stirs with it somewhat, the first half of the eleventh (1000-1050) more vigorously ; with the opening of the second half of the eleventh (after 1050)—just before Hastings—a great reform is in full swing all over the West, and floods England after the Conquest : the profound Gregorian cleansing which restored Christendom and opened the splendour of the Middle Ages.

That this corruption of the secular Church was proceeding, first slowly, then more rapidly, as the feudal system gained power, is a thing we must carry with us in the background of the English story from Alfred to Hastings, that we may understand the struggle against it, and later, the Quarrel of the Investitures under the Norman kings.

V

The Effect of Alfred

A.D. 878–A.D. 991

113 Years

V

THE EFFECT OF ALFRED

(A.D. 878–991—113 Years)

(A) The End of Alfred's own Reign (A.D. 878–900 —22 Years)

THE effect of Alfred upon history for just over a century after his great victory at Eddington lies in three parts.

The first part covers the end of Alfred's own reign: from the victory at Eddington to Alfred's death: 878-900: twenty-two years.

The second covers that of his son Edward, and that of his grandson Athelstan. It ends with the death of the latter in 940. It is the lifetime of a man and was all of it witnessed by one generation, which saw at its close a culmination in the greatness of Athelstan's court: 900-940: forty years.

The third part is the lifetime of St. Dunstan, who first came into notice as little more than a lad at Athelstan's death in 940, and who was the real manager of England from 946 to close upon his own death in 988. After him a very few remaining years carry us to the decisive date of 991, from which we have to deal more and more with Christian and civilized Norwegians and Danes, men whom Englishmen felt for the first time to be at last their equals and fully part of the same Christendom, so that the struggle for the Crown between the Danes and the native house of Wessex became possible: 940-991: fifty-one years.

Alfred has been lately called "the Great." He deserves that modern and artificial title, not only because he turned

the history of his country and of Christendom by the victory over Guthrum, but because he set himself to inform and change his time for the better through his own will and intelligence. He set himself to give England what every Christian country in the Dark Ages most needed, namely, Sustenance : the power to " carry on." His success against the Danes, and his forcible conversion of them, gave him fifteen years of peace—from 878 to 893. These years came just at that time in his life which are the years of a man's greatest energy and maturity—from his thirtieth to his forty-fifth year ; and he employed them in transforming his State of South England (or Wessex, as it had gradually come to be called) in two ways, civil and military.

Alfred restores Latin

On the civil side he restored culture. The mark of culture, the bond of our civilization, is the Latin tongue. One of the chief marks of a breakdown with us Europeans is a forgetfulness of Latin. By the end of the heathen raids England showed a symptom which you find over and over again in the history of a European people when it is at a low point in its vitality—Latin was being lost.

The first need, the most essential, was to stop that kind of decay, because, with its continuance, the framework of civilization would soon have broken down. Alfred restored the least necessary amount of Latin throughout the clergy. He left, at the end of his effort, a restored Latin tongue to the island. By so acting he in an indirect manner invigorated the whole of the Church throughout England.

and therefore the Christian religion

It must always be remembered when we read the story of come-and-go between the king's overlordship of the northern Danish lords and the demands of those lords to gain independence, that the Church was all the while organized throughout the island as one thing, and was much more of a real unity than any other. It was in constant communication with the mass of the Christian Church throughout Europe centred in Rome, and, so far as this island alone was concerned, it functioned universally with far more

detail and with far more regular power than the king and his officers, even during this night of feudalism, with all its decay of ecclesiastical organization.

Therefore, to reinvigorate the Church and to restore its principles of continuity and tradition, as Alfred did, was to make the civilized south more and more preponderant over the Danish garrisons in the north, and to spread the atmosphere of civilization, as it were, all over those newly converted garrisons. Within those garrisons there were not a few pagan leaders still alive, and pagan compatriots were bound to reach them from beyond the seas perpetually, although the presence of the disciplined and hieratic Church, acting throughout north and south, weakened this element of disruption in the island. The work was not done, of course, without foreign aid, especially from France, where the king seems to have specially relied upon a monk from the great monastery of Corbie, near Amiens; a German who had come originally from the country which Charlemagne had begun to civilize on the Lower Elbe.

As a complement to this, and a guide to the revival of Latin, Alfred had the classical speech of Europe translated into his own court language, which was the standard one among the various local dialects of Wessex. What we call "Anglo-Saxon" takes on henceforward the position of a true vernacular. It appears even in official documents occasionally, and comes to have almost the dignity of a literary language. In this it was a very early experiment. Had not the Norman influence of the eleventh century landing in the Conquest come and swamped it, this official Anglo-Saxon of the court of Winchester might have developed into a modern tongue, with earlier models than any other. For there was as yet no French or Italian or Spanish literary tongue in official or academic use, and, of course, no trace of a German one. But the experiment failed; the French of the Conquest cut it short; and when the English language arose in the fourteenth century it was the latest born of all

and translates Latin words into Anglo-Saxon

the Christian idioms. That youthfulness is a source of its strength to-day.

Codifies law

Further, Alfred codified the law and established some sort of real hierarchy of courts and officials throughout that South of England, Wessex, which he directly governed. His attention to the detail of organization in all this work of re-establishment gave rise to many legends which surround his name. For instance, there is the legend that he founded the University of Oxford—there is neither proof nor likelihood that he made any great centre there, and the idea of a "University" is a thing of the twelfth, not of the tenth, century.[1] There is the still more absurd legend that he marked out the boundaries of the shires, which were even in his time much older than any existing record, probably, as we have seen, at least Roman in their origin if not prehistoric. There is even a legend that he instituted the jury!—a French judicial innovation, with a French judicial name, the work of the French Angevin kings, hundreds of years after his time.

But these legends, like all legends, have a basis of truth in them. The idea grew up long after Alfred that he had started the University of Oxford, because he had, indeed, started schools everywhere and revived learning. The idea arose that he had mapped out the shires because he first, after a long interval of chaos, re-established a vigorous government, of which the shire was the unit. He may also —such a government would do so—have settled boundary disputes.

The legend that he originated the jury arose from the fact that he did presumably revive and re-invigorate the popular meetings which dated from beyond all record, and which you will find in any simple society: the taking of evidence in such meetings from an accused man's neighbours,

[1] But it is likely enough that there were the beginnings of schools there, for the tradition is strong, and there is no smoke without fire.

for or against him, and the making of neighbours corporately responsible in groups for the local peace.

On the military side Alfred did three most important things :—

(1) He instituted a temporary true army.

and organizes an army

The reason the heathen raids of a few thousand pirates had been met with such insufficient effect was that there was no way of meeting them, save by a momentary, untrained local levy. Now a force of this kind, especially in a simple society, is valueless for any operations requiring rapidity and combination. It cannot be taught, armed, and organized as a separate body, nor given any diversity of strategic movement. You cannot, for instance, divide such a body into two distinct operations to watch two possible points of attack and to converge together upon that which will turn out to be the main assault. Moreover (most important of all), the civilian levy is necessarily very short-lived, a character which enhances all its other deficiencies.

What Alfred did was to think out a principle of rotation, to register what we should call to-day " the classes " of recruits, the working of which in its simplest form meant that one " class " could remain for work while the other could be mobilized for recruiting, training, and fighting. In practice, of course, the thing must have been more complicated than a mere rotation of two classes, although that is the form in which the thing has come down to us.

For the first time in many generations something like a trained force was at the disposal of the national government. It was small, it was still largely local, but it was a great advance on what had gone before. It was the existence of this true army which explains most of what followed, and especially the great reign of Athelstan. It is, on the material side, the chief factor in what I have called " the effect of Alfred."

(2) He fortified. As all the tide was running with him

Alfred fortifies as he pushes forward his frontiers northward against the Danes

he strengthened civilization against the half-civilized garrisons of the north; and, as his influence was bound to spread after his decisive victory, it was to his interest to stake out each point of the advance by strongholds. He had something like a survey made of all the waterways by which raids could come inland, and all the points where communications crossed each other, and all the opportunities in each locality for defensive work. And he put up these permanent defensive works everywhere. It was a great mark of his spirit. We must remember that this was the time in the history of Europe when the defensive began to become especially strong. Well-defended posts, provisioned and with water, could hold out for months, and so long as the scheme was in the hands of one centre and not dispersed among a number of half-independent lords, it was a strength for that centre. From this time, right on to the end of the Middle Ages and the use of cannon, we shall find that the political history of England is largely an alternation of periods when (as under Alfred, William the Conqueror, Edward I) the strongholds, or "castles," were really in the hands of the Crown, and periods when the practical use of them fell to local magnates or other subordinates of the Crown.

and makes a navy

(3) Alfred also established the beginnings of a navy. Nations with a long seaboard alternate between regular active use of the sea and a complete neglect of it. In England this alternation has been most marked. The passage from a period of many generations during which military power at sea was forgotten to the re-establishment of such power is marked by Alfred.[1] It was the direct effect of his vigorous advance against the pirates. The policy was simple enough. It aimed at outbuilding the only enemy he had to fear, not in numbers, but in type of vessel.

[1] After 410 and the last of the Roman fleet, there is no sign of a maritime armament, save in the brief Roman experiment of Edwin; and Alfred could not at first even get English crews.

He could not hope, in the social circumstances of the country he governed, to outbuild them in numbers, for the whole population of the opposing coast on the North Sea, Danish and Norwegian, was concentrated on the building of ships—fighting ships. Alfred, on the other hand, had probably the advantage of superior workmanship and better tools and larger slip-ways, and all that goes with a more developed civilization. He gave his new ships much more freeboard and a greater draught than the galleys of the Danes. These had always been of very shallow draught, because they had to enter narrow waters for loot, and, as robbers, always desired to penetrate inland as far as possible. The defending ships, cruising outside the river mouths, could afford to be of greater draught. The high freeboard—that is, the height of the deck or archers' benches above the water—was merely a matter of extra expense. The higher freeboard gave a tactical advantage in observation and in fire, for the hired foreign crews (mixed later with native ones) were thus able to shoot down on to the pirate ships and be under better cover as they did so. The greater draught also gave greater stability to the ship, and therefore greater opportunities to the archers on board. Another tactical advantage was the greater ease of boarding from the larger ship to the smaller, while an attack upon the former from the latter was like an attack upon the wall of a defence.

His type of ship

There was not only this material development of a navy by Alfred, there was also the arrangement of its manning. He had had to begin with adventurers and foreigners. He ended by having large native crews of fighting men aboard.

In domestic policy Alfred first of all organized that half of the Midlands, of Mercia (the old march land between Eastern and Western Britain), the boundaries of which had been left uncertain under the Treaty of Wedmore (because Guthrum pretended to no jurisdiction north of Ouse). He asserted his power there indirectly, through a vassal who also became his son-in-law, for he married his daughter

He advances his power into Mercia

Ethelflæd to the military leader or Dux of the province. Through this daughter the crown of Winchester had upon the whole of the district a hold which it maintained and extended long after Alfred's death, and the King of Winchester presumably gathered taxes and granted land and did all a ruler should, right up to some vague boundary of Pennine and Trent.

and is at last head of all England though directly ruling but half

More important, perhaps, than this was the indirect effect of so much new organization and energy. Alfred was in some general manner, with little material effect no doubt, but with a good deal of moral effect, recognized as the chief, the head, not only of the district he directly administered, but of nearly all the civilized parts of the island. This character was not so marked as we shall find it to be under his grandson, but it existed. Probably if you had landed anywhere south of the Grampians in the period between Eddington and Alfred's death, and had spoken of the "King," those who heard you might have been in doubt of whether you were speaking of the local leader or the greater monarch at Winchester. If we put it that way, we have it, I think, as accurately put as the vague conditions of the time will allow.[1]

I have said that Alfred had fifteen years—the most vigorous fifteen years of a man's life—in which to do this important work. At the end of that interval of peace he was disturbed again by a violent attack from the sea, led by a man of whom it would be interesting to know more, the pirate Hasting.

Hasting attacks England, A.D. 893

Hasting was probably a French peasant from the Upper Seine. Turned vagabond and ne'er-do-well, he joined, as his kind had done for centuries, the barbarian parasites of the Roman order, and made himself a leader. He came down in 893 upon the Narrows between the French coast and Kent, with rather over 300 ships and a small army of fighting

[1] For instance, it is one of those recurrent moments when the chiefs of North Wales vaguely admit a nominal English overlordship for a time.

men. This force struck in two places on the south and north coasts of Kent. The first part came to the old Roman harbour of Lemanis, which was not yet silted up by the rising of the land, and is marked by the modern Lympne near Folkestone. Thence he had sailed round again eastward and got up the Rother near Rye and threw up entrenchments at Appledore,[1] whence at a distance of 35 miles his cavalry could report upon the movements of the second entrenched body on the northern coast. This second force—only a quarter of the whole—made for the mouth of the Thames, got into the shoal water of the Swale, and entrenched itself at Milton. Alfred met this double incursion by posting himself with a larger body somewhere halfway between. It is interesting to discuss where this point may have been, but nothing certain can be arrived at.

Hasting was held up by the rapidity of Alfred's manœuvre, and treated. Alfred imposed terms and the nature of those terms merits very close attention, for they present two features of the first importance to the future: (*a*) Hasting gave as hostages two of his sons, *and accepted the condition that they, merged though he was in a pagan host from overseas, should be baptized.* This is the first stamping of civilization upon the heathens from beyond the seas, for though we know there had already been a forcible conversion of the mass of Danes settled within the island, we shall see later how this policy was continued uninterruptedly until England had Christianized Scandinavia; (*b*) *Alfred consented to pay the pirate a large sum of money.* This was the formal origin in a definite treaty of the policy which had already been sketched in 871, which continued for over a century, and which is of such high value for the understanding of that period that we must delay upon it a little.

accepts baptism for his sons

Alfred responsible for the policy of the Danegeld

When the buying-off of the pirates had acquired a

[1] The Kentish "Aber-dour": nothing to do with the Devon one of Hubba's defeat, 300 miles away.

regular name, and when the sums were raised by a regular tax, "Danegeld"—a name which did not arise until long after Alfred's time—men's eyes were fully awake to the policy, and historians, especially later historians, ascribe to it many of the misfortunes that followed. But what no one seems to have grasped is that Alfred was the man who began it, and if Alfred began it there was probably something to say for it. All through history the civilized power has dealt with the uncivilized somewhat after this fashion. It is the line of least resistance, and it is often the best line to take. You may call it a subsidy, or a wage, or you may call it a surrender to blackmail, but the essential thing is that the civilized power gets what it wants at an expense which it can afford, just as we do when we subsidize a half-barbaric frontier chieftain to-day. The drawback is the fact that it whets the barbarians' appetite, and if he regards it as a sign of weakness he will certainly ask for more. But there is an advantage which is too often lost sight of. A civilized power which pays this tribute, or subsidy—whichever you like to call it—has a hold upon the uncivilized, especially if the payment is at all regular. It is for the civilized power, if that power be strong enough, a form of insurance. The essential thing to remember is that *Alfred was the creator of this policy*. Payments had been made earlier, in 871, as we have seen, but the moment of formal precedent was the treaty with Hasting.

The advantages and disadvantages of Danegeld

The treaty was not properly kept. Hasting could not fully control his followers, and those at Appledore broke through the ill-inhabited clay of the Weald. Alfred's forces did not catch up with them till they had got to Farnham. There they manœuvred them back on to the Thames, where they seem to have poured up the Roman road to Staines, and to have crossed by the bridge there. The remnant took refuge in an island at the mouth of the Colne, where they surrendered, but again only on terms, the terms of being paid money.

All the following months were full of similar fighting. There was an attack from the sea on the north and south of Devon which was beaten off, and Hasting returned to Essex, throwing up a camp at Bemfleet. Ethelred, the Dux (or "Ealdorman") of Mercia, concentrated an army and stormed his defence, capturing his treasure and his wife. Soon after Hasting abandoned the raiding of England, made for France, and ended up by a truce with the Emperor on the Continent and the governorship of Chartres and its neighbourhood, as a source of permanent income and power for himself.

The end of Hasting

But though Hasting had gone, a body of pirates continued in action and set up a camp on the north of the Thames Estuary at Shoeburyness, where they were besieged. They cut their way out, raided right across inland to Chester, where Alfred followed them and drove them into Northumbria.

In 895 there was yet another effort on the part of the pirates, who, after making another camp on the Essex shore, came up the Lea and threw up, only 20 miles from London, entrenchments, which the Londoners attacked but could not force. They raided again across inland as far as Bridgnorth, and again were driven eastward to where so many of their compatriots were settled, in East Anglia. After that date the fighting died down.

More Danish fighting, A.D. 895

Alfred's new army had proved that it could always get the better of a raid. Two years later there was an interesting little episode in the Solent, the details of which give us a very illuminating glimpse of the size of the ships and their crews. It was fought between six royal ships and six pirate ships. Three of the latter were captured with a loss of about half their crews—120 men. The other three got away through Spithead and round Selsey Bill, but the three royal ships followed them. One escaped, the other two were captured and their crews executed as pirates.

Alfred's successes against the pirates

It is another piece of evidence upon the scale of these

things that in the summer Alfred ended the attack by taking altogether twenty vessels, or putting out of action, say, about 800 to 1000 men. With that date ends the active story of his reign. He died on the 26th of October, 900.[1]

At this moment of his death we must note who were his descendants, in order to follow the events of the next two reigns.

He left two sons: the elder was called Edward, the younger Ethelred. Edward had already had born to him, seven years before Alfred died, a son, christened Athelstan, and destined later to bring the house of Alfred to the height of its glory.

Everyone knows the story of Alfred's devotion to the little boy, and his girding him with a tiny belt and sword.

Alfred also left three daughters—Ethelflæd, whom we have seen was married to the Governor of English Mercia; Ethelgive, whom he put at the head of his great nunnery at Shaftesbury; and Alfritha, who was the wife of the Count of Flanders—one of the French continental feudal princes, half independent under the decaying Emperors of the line of Charlemagne.

[1] The date is not absolutely certain. It may have been 901, as is usually given. But the weight of evidence is for 900.

(B) Edward the Elder and Athelstan

(A.D. 900–941—41 Years)

Edward, whom historians came later to distinguish from the other Edwards by the title of "The Elder," only succeeded to Alfred, his father, after some difficulty, which was less important in itself than in its consequences.

Edward the Elder's accession, A.D. 900

The difficulty was the claim of his cousin Ethelwald, the son of Alfred's elder brother, Ethelred. He made all sorts of trouble, fleeing hither and thither, taking refuge at last with the Danish garrison in the north. He got together a large mixed force of pirates, adventurers, and others (everything in that day depended upon personal leadership), seized Essex, and began one of the raids with which England was already so familiar, going up through the Midlands. He was defeated, of course, by the regular army of Edward; but it is what followed that is important.

Ethelwald's rebellion

Edward turned the broken rebel [1] right into the country which the Danes held with their garrisons: right into all that East English district which Alfred had left them to govern independently of his own Wessex. Edward did not try to remain there or establish garrisons there. Indeed, a remnant of his force which would not obey his orders was cut to pieces by the enemy when Edward retreated. But

[1] I say "rebel" because there was no regular hereditary succession of *right* in Wessex. Fighting was too continual for that, and the French Capetian monarchy, which made the right of the eldest son sacred all over Europe, was not yet in existence. The King of England was the accepted leader of the Royal House. It is nonsense, of course, to talk of his "election" in the modern sense of the word; but some clique in the Council, or the army in the field, or wealth, decided it between them among the male claimants to Royal blood, and confirmation was normally in the Council's name.

this pursuit had the effect of completely breaking the spirit of those Danish garrisons which lay nearest to his own direct government.

and death

The Pretender was killed in the fighting, so was the Danish Governor of the East Anglians; and by 905 the foundation of a deliberate policy for restoring the power of the English King throughout England was laid.

At this point it is necessary to know something of the character of that society, in ignorance of which we cannot understand the ebb and flow of power. We shall find Edward establishing himself over all England, and his son Athelstan holding a still stronger position than he himself had occupied. Then, later, just after Athelstan and forty to fifty years after Alfred, we find what are still called Danish garrisons in the north repudiating the overlordship of Wessex, and again asserting their old frontiers. We find these northern Danes receiving sea rovers and pirates, and using them against the more civilized navy of the south. We find that civilized navy, before the end of the century, actually allying itself with new adventurers from oversea—and so on.

Now the whole of this come-and-go of the British tenth century (900-1000) can only be understood if we grasp the fact that all the time a comparatively small element of free, armed, Scandinavian fighters in the north and east of Britain was mixing more and more with the millions of native population—mainly serfs—and was more and more intermarried with the native free farmers and lords, and less and less of a disruptive element. We are reading history all wrong if we talk of the "Danish" north and east as though it were a separate country inhabited by a separate people, and as though the Danes and Norwegians, who landed by chance boatloads in North England, came to compatriots who received them as friends on account of a similarity of blood and language. The pirates only used the north and east as a base because it was the most convenient point of landing

and attack. Meanwhile the north and east liked to be as independent of the south as possible, and the English Crown at Winchester, owing in part to its greater distance and isolation, in part to its wealth, was the common rallying centre of the more civilized and wealthy south. There is no question of two races, still less of two States in conflict. What we have is a few thousand pirates (with relics of their old heathenism) imposing themselves, further invasion of their ships, small pirate garrisons and their descendants trying to assert a measure of local independence (because the local taxes filled their pockets). These few Danes and all the English of the north were subservient to the King at Winchester when he was strong, and disregarded him when he was weak. That went on for three generations (from, say, 900 to 1013), until at last the ambition of the northern kings (Christian by that time) in Denmark led them to make their bid for the throne of England and for the empire of the North Sea. All the while the unifying principle of England, underlying the struggle between the descendants of the northern Danish garrisons against the head Crown of Wessex and the later struggle for the crown itself, was the Church. The organization of the Church, under the two provinces of York and Canterbury, remained quite indifferent to the fluctuations of civil conditions, and superior to them.

Edward the Elder's policy of imposing his Winchester authority as widely as possible on the north and east had a powerful instrument in his sister Ethelflæd in English Mercia.

Edward takes over half the Midlands

Her husband, the ruler of the district, was ill during all the last years of his life, dying in 910. During his illness Ethelflæd took over the government of the district; and on his death her brother, the King Edward, decided to take over the direct government of London and of Oxford. This move was important, because it put him across the Thames and gave him two valuable units of revenue; one,

of course, London, was far the most valuable tax-paying unit in the kingdom, much more valuable than Oxford. It also gave him two important bridge-heads for going north, and a very considerable accession of population, which is as much as to say, revenue and recruiting power. When Ethelflæd, who was called "The Lady of the Mercians," died ten years after her husband, in 917, her brother Edward took over the whole of her area of government. In the meanwhile, he had raided right into Northumbria, and had badly beaten a counter raid of the Danish chieftains and their English armies, which had pushed south as far as Gloucestershire. During this fighting, and as a consequence of it, Edward continued his father's plan of blocking out his advance by new strongholds.

His power advances North

Before his sister's death the Crown of Wessex, represented by her forces, had already got all the Midlands. They had defeated the Danish garrison of Derby in the streets of the city, and occupied, with less fighting, Leicester and the district around it. Counter attacks of the Danish garrisons upon the new frontier marked by the new outposts of Wessex failed. Edward, after his sister's death, continued to push forward, and within a year of her death the East Anglian Danish garrisons, the descendants of Guthrum's original body, which had made its treaty with his father Alfred, forty-two years before, formally admitted his overlordship.

and includes at last Leicester and Derby, A.D. 919-920

He continued to push forward, putting up a defended garrison at Manchester, another at Nottingham, another at Stamford. By the time of his death in 924 he was in control, more or less direct, of all England. The Lowland Scottish and the Highlands, the Celtic king of Strathclyde, and the Welsh, acknowledged a sort of vague supremacy in him; the princes of Wales even paid a tribute.

Nottingham, Stamford and Manchester

Edward therefore left everything, all the foundations, ready for what his more famous son Athelstan was to build.

Edward the Elder had died at Farndon on the Trent in 924. The eldest of his sons died at almost the same moment, and it was therefore Athelstan, the second son, now thirty years of age, who came to the throne.

Death of Edward the Elder, A.D. 924

Coming in the interval between the pirate raids and the Scandinavian dynastic attempt on England, he re-established a strong connection with Europe; and he cut so great a figure in European life that it is well to know something of his person.

He was a man thin, rather short, distinguished by a great mass of fair hair, which he wore in ringlets, and into which he twined threads of gold. Like the whole of that family, he was short-lived, and during that short life not of good health. But he owed his future greatness not only to the opportunity created by his father and grandfather, but also in great part to his own character. For though one can see little of that character through the general panegyric of his time and of posterity, he was clearly a man who made friendships and kept them, and also one of those men who have a national ambition as well as a personal one. He lived over fifteen years after his accession—just the same fifteen years as had been the principal years of his grandfather Alfred, the thirtieth to the forty-fifth; and those fifteen years were the summit of the Crown of Wessex; the term during which the court of Winchester played its greatest part, not only in England but in Europe.

Athelstan accedes: his person

character

and great position in Europe, A.D. 924-940

Like his father, he found opposition to his accession, but it was easily overcome. He increased the hold of his father over the north by marrying his sister to Sightric, the head of the Danish garrisons in Northumbria. The man was still heathen, but consented to baptism. He died shortly after, and the district was taken over in direct government by Athelstan.

Athelstan takes over Northumbria

Sightric left a son to whom we must pay particular attention, because from his claims there followed much of the subsequent difficulty with the north. This son was

Anlaff, Sightric's son

Anlaff. Anlaff, after Athelstan had taken over his father's kingdom, fled to Ireland.

Athelstan's vigorous claim to overlordship of all Britain

Athelstan made as real as possible the vague overlordship which his father had established over the rest of the island. He exactly defined and vigorously exacted the tribute from Wales. He made a boundary of the Tamar and insisted on the direct government of Exeter, which town had been hitherto shared between Cornish and Wessex local powers. He exacted personal fealty in due feudal form (it had become the regular form of all Christendom by this time) from the King of the Scots, Constantine, and from the Welsh princes, as well as from the Cornishmen, and all this work he gradually and rapidly accomplished within the first three years of his power.[1] It was a real acquisition of power, and not a mere drift, as is clear from the attempted revolt of Constantine and the Scots, six and a half years later, in 933; a revolt which Athelstan immediately put down by a skilful invasion which went right into the heart of Constantine's country up to near Aberdeen, and compelled his submission.

Athelstan was at this moment, nine years after he had come to the throne, the first acting monarch of the whole island. It is true this "British" monarchy was very vague. All its outlying parts were independent save for a verbal admission of overlordship in Athelstan, and even the nearer parts had a large measure of independence; but Athelstan's reception of homage revived that Roman memory of a true British unit—all the island—which had never been completely lost. And Athelstan calls himself "Basileus" and "Imperator."

Athelstan revives the Roman ideal of a British unity

Partly as a consequence of this domestic position, partly through the wealth that accompanied it, Athelstan played a great part abroad as well as at home.

It was the moment when the surviving ideal of Charlemagne's western Empire was being replaced by the fact

[1] I make no allusion to the murder of his brother Edwin, which surely is not history.

of virtually independent kingships. These had not arranged themselves, even in their beginnings, but they were shaping ; and Athelstan, by his actions with the Continent, may be said to have presided at the origins of all that great change. Not that he had any policy in it or effect upon it, but he was, as it were, the principal witness of it.

He begins the Christianizing of Norway

At the same time, it is from his court, as we saw on an earlier page, that the Christianizing of the Scandinavians begins.

It was with Athelstan that young Hakon resided, and it was at his court that the boy was baptized ; it was thence he sailed, with an English escort, for Norway, in the tenth year of Athelstan's reign.

Athelstan's great European connections : one sister is wife of Charles the Simple

It was from Athelstan's court that his own sister, Edgiva, had proceeded to marry the Carolingian King of France, Charles the Simple, and Charles's son Louis had lived at Athelstan's court as an exile after the revolt against Charles abroad.

It was from Athelstan's court that the Normans, with whom the king was in friendship and alliance, supported the claim of Louis to the Empire ; and when Louis landed at Boulogne, to be crowned at Laon, he came almost as an Englishman, surrounded by a throng of Englishmen and with a sort of English court ; when he was attacked it was Athelstan's fleet that supported him upon the shores of the Empire, attacking Picardy.

He supports his nephew Louis d'Outremer in his claim to the Empire

It was from Athelstan's court, again, that another sister, Ethelflæd, was married in the sixth year of his reign to a man from whom springs the Capetian dynasty of France—Hugh the Great ; and only a little later the man who stands at the origin of the mediæval German Empire sought a wife for his son, from the same court. He was to be Otto the Great and his wife was Athelstan's sister Edith ; another sister was married to the overlord of Aquitaine, and Athelstan's court was also the refuge of the heir to Brittany.

He is also brother-in-law to the first Capetian

There was no other centre in the early tenth century

which had so many attachments, so many interests, all over the growing nations of the West, as the centre of Winchester, and you have in that period a sort of parallel to the great business of the Angevin revival over 200 years later. All this was crowned by what looked at the moment a final settlement of the relations between the great king of the south and the fluctuating Danish garrisons of the north and east. The critical moment came in the year 937, which stands out in history under the name and episode of the Battle of Brunanburgh.

The Battle of Brunanburgh, A.D. 937 or 938

Anlaff came back in this year, 937, at the head of a very large force, much the largest that had ever attempted an invasion of this island. It was not a force of pirates. It was composed of every kind of fighting adventurer—Scotch, Danish, English. It was allied with the Highlanders and with the Welsh, who had sworn fealty to Athelstan, but were ready to rebel. One may measure the magnitude of the invasion by the numbers of the fleet, which are given accurately by contemporaries at 615 sail. Allowing for many small craft, that probably does not mean less than, and probably more than, 25,000 men.

The moment was critical, since there hung on it not a mere change of dynasty, but probably the unity and advancing civilization of this island. For, though the invading host was not barbaric as former hosts had been, it was mixed and had not many fully civilized elements, and its success would have completely broken the framework which Alfred had erected. As it was, that framework (later severely tried by the difficulties following Athelstan's death) stood the strain, and England remained loosely one during the wars of the next 100 years, until it was made closely one by William the Conqueror. Athelstan allied himself with others of the sea rovers (his army, though it was the instrument which had effected all his power, was not equal alone to the task before him). He gained time by negotiations, and then fought the Battle of Brunanburgh with complete success.

Complete victory of Athelstan

The Scots, with their king, Constantine, at their head, were routed. The core of the army of adventurers, under the leadership of Anlaff, held out last, after its allies had broken. The great mass of Athelstan's army, English and allied, closed round it and destroyed it, though Anlaff himself escaped.[1]

Brunanburgh,[2] coming though it did at the very end of the reign, finally confirmed Athelstan's splendid position in England and in Europe. It was, at any rate, partly the effect of the victory just coming at the time of the Imperial German marriage—the marriage with Otto—that for the first time we get the unity of England admitted in a title. Athelstan was King of England, national king, and nothing else. He confirms his position, as we saw, with all manner of traditional Roman titles in contemporary documents and in his coinage, calling himself " Basileus " and " Imperator " and the rest. In the height of his power, not yet old (in his forty-sixth year), he died on the 27th of October, 940.

who dies shortly after (27 Oct., 940)

[1] The battle was the occasion of what is perhaps the greatest of the old English songs, with Tennyson's adaptation of which modern readers are familiar; and it bears evidence that the original pirate raids of the Angles and the Saxons four and five centuries earlier were real, however small they may have been in scale. For the poet specially mentions them as living traditions.

[2] No one knows where the battle was fought.

(C) The Age of St. Dunstan: From the Death of Athelstan, October 27th, 940, to the Battle of Maldon in 991.

The period that of St. Dunstan

Though the next fifty years are not exactly coincident with the public life of St. Dunstan—he was only fifteen or sixteen when Athelstan died, and he himself died three years before the Battle of Maldon—they are his period. It is his great personality which dominates them and marks the society of the time.

who restores Religious discipline

He was the man who imposed upon England, at a time when the Continent was still recalcitrant to it, the beginnings of that great reform in the discipline of the Faith which Gregory VII was to crown more than a century later, and which, more than the other two great forces (the Crusades, the Norman State) were to form the Middle Ages and to light the splendour of those great centuries which suffer at their end the shipwreck of the Reformation.

and makes England a leader in the new Church movement

His advantage lay in that geographical compactness of the English State, its boundary of the sea, its reasonable size, which has repeatedly throughout history permitted this country to influence even the greatest European movements. He might well have become the founder of the first centrally governed society in the West, had not the Dynastic struggle between English and Scandinavian claimants to the throne thrown back the work after his death and led to that chaos which the Norman Conquest redeemed. As it was, William the Conqueror is the founder of a completely united England, but St. Dunstan deserved the title by merit, though not by fortune.

His birth and character

He was of the native nobility and of the West: typically English in the vividness of his interior vision, typically of the West in his intensity of feeling; he was of Arthur's country and moulded by Glastonbury—the first, the oldest of the centres of mystery in England. To understand his action we must turn to a place and a name which were the seed of all the change in Europe: Cluny, in the heart of the Gauls.

The deepest of feudal disarray, of culture half-forgotten and the Latin tradition obscured, may be called "The Darkness of the Death of Charlemagne." It was the gloom of the ninth century continued through the tenth. Not only England, shaken by pirate blows, but all the West, under Scandinavian, Islamic, and Mongol attacks, was exhausted. The Church, the cement of Europe, began to crumble, to disintegrate in parts. The old rule of celibacy weakened: priests married in their obscurity, then even at last some prelates—or left a doubtful case between wedlock and concubinage. There was, in wild parts, an inheritance of sees from father to son. Laymen gave and sold livings, and lay rulers abbacies and bishoprics. The independence of her official hierarchy, which is the essence of the Church's full functioning, was very nearly forgotten.

The feudal corruption of the Church

Now it was just in the thick of this, in 910 (within a century of Charlemagne's death), that a Duke of Aquitaine founded Cluny, a monastery standing, typically, in the very heart of the Gauls, and therefore of Christendom; and Cluny discovered the medicine required for restoring Europe: Discipline. It revived and enhanced the Benedictine spirit, making something almost new. Cluny shone like a light in that darkness, and its influence was to restore the freedom of the hierarchy by destroying the purchase and sale of hierarchical posts, bishoprics, abbacies (simony), and by destroying the claim of laymen to invest priests with spiritual powers (lay investiture). Its influence was, further, to restore strength to the Church along with freedom by

Foundation of Cluny

imposing celibacy again as a strict rule of practice, not theory: one applicable to the whole body of the ordained. Cluny was the monastic vision re-leavening the world.

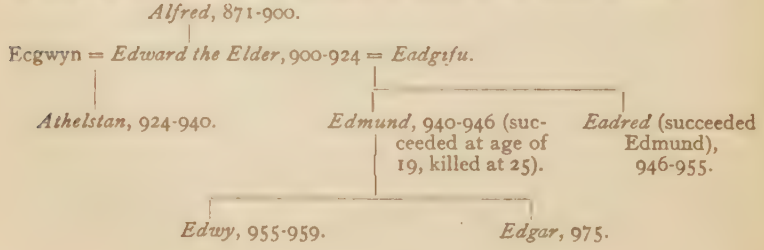
Dunstan Abbot of Glastonbury at 19 or 20

The new spirit, the Clugniac, was already at work when Dunstan was made Abbot of Glastonbury—and he perhaps then only in his nineteenth or twentieth year! It was the sacred place where he had been to school as a child, and had been granted to see a vision; where the Irish teachers had formed his ardent mind which always saw beyond this world, and yet had so keen an activity in all the things of this world—especially in handiwork and music—whither he had retired and determined on the religious life after his companions at court had thrust him out.

It was Edmund the King, the younger half-brother [1] of Athelstan, and his successor, who had thus marked the genius of Dunstan, one young man appointing another; for Edmund the King was but twenty-two years old when he thus put the saint, two years his junior, at the head of the famous house. By that year Edmund had already affirmed his power over the Danish princes of the North, compelling their baptism (and later expelling them and ruling it directly); he warred right up to Solway and into Wales as well.

[1] As with so many dates of this dark time, there is a doubt. I give the evidence and leave it at that: (*a*) Dunstan was not born earlier than 924, probably in 925; (*b*) the Chronicle gives 943 as the date of his appointment to Glastonbury; (*c*) his biographer, writing sixty years after, says he was twenty-two when he was appointed.

The genealogy of Athelstan and Edmund and their successors stands thus, covering the century from the accession of Alfred to the death of Edgar:—


Alfred, 871-900.
Ecgwyn = *Edward the Elder*, 900-924 = *Eadgifu*.
Athelstan, 924-940.
Edmund, 940-946 (succeeded at age of 19, killed at 25).
Eadred (succeeded Edmund), 946-955.
Edwy, 955-959.
Edgar, 975.

Edmund's vigorous reign was short. He was just on twenty-five when an outlaw, Leofa, slipped in amongst the guests at the king's table, and, fighting against the steward, who recognized and would have expelled him, raised a brawl, in the melee of which Edmund himself was stabbed and died—May 26th, 946. His friend Dunstan was spiritually forewarned of that tragedy.

Patronized by Edmund

During those short six years of Edmund's rule St. Dunstan grew in power. He was already a chief adviser and the Keeper of the Treasure when Edmund's brother, Eadred, was given the throne in succession.

and by Eadred

Eadred was an invalid, energetic of mind and will, but sickly in body. It was Dunstan who controlled, advised, and advanced England. The Danish leaders in the north rebelled. It was they who then (apparently)—that is, in 947—called in Eric of the Bloody Axe, whom the Norwegians had expelled for his tyranny, and put him up as a king over York, Durham, and the rest. The determination of Eadred and Dunstan was too much for him. Eadred went north with a great army; Eric fled, and the Scandinavian chieftains submitted, in 948. Till 952 the King of England held all Northumbria. Eric came back and attempted to hold Yorkshire alone through 953, but the dread of the civilized south and its great army made the district drive him out again in the next year. Eadred the King, with St. Dunstan as his chief adviser, was the man who put an end to the half-separation of the North.

who, under St. Dunstan's guidance, recovers all the North, A.D. 954

In the year 955 Eadred's life-long illness reached its end. The young man lay dying at Frome. He sent to Glastonbury, close at hand, to St. Dunstan, for the treasure, that he might make his will, and the great abbot set out with the long train of wagons, a day's journey up the Mendips. But before he came to the town a Voice warned him that the king had died in peace. He reached Frome, he took his friend's body and bore it to Winchester, where he buried it beside the great Alfred.

Death of Eadred, A.D. 955

Then followed an odd episode of four years: the reign of Eadred's nephew, Edwy,[1] a vicious boy. We know exceedingly little about it, there are only a collection of charters, the two early lives of St. Dunstan (half a century later), a word or two in the Chronicle, and Ethelweard. But what we do know is a further astonishing proof of the power of monarchy as an institution in the Dark Ages—the inheritance of the Roman absolutism and its sacred ceremonial. It is also a vivid picture of the simplicity, the domesticity, of those years.

Miserable reign of Edwy, a proof of the power kingship in the tenth century, 955-959

Briefly, the story is this. Eadred having no sons, and Edmund I's sons being no longer infants, the magnates turned to them and made the elder of them, Edwy, king, although he was but fifteen years old. He was of great beauty and thoroughly corrupt. His mother was dead; his grandmother was his natural guardian. It was so important to get a hold upon the King—even when he was little more than a child—that a woman of good blood and hopelessly abandoned, one Ethelgifu, seduced him and further proposed an unnatural marriage with her own daughter—no older than the wretched boy-king. In 956, the year after Edwy had been named by the Concilium of Magnates to succeed, there was a coronation ceremony at Kingston-on-Thames. The lad left the banqueting-hall, unceremoniously, for the women's rooms. The nobles were offended, sent Dunstan and a colleague to fetch him back, and thereby made Ethelgifu the mortal enemy of the Saint. It all reads like a rustic tale of a small home, with the details of the lad's crown tossed on the floor and his being dragged back to the bishops and *Comites* at table. Yet such was the prestige of kingship that this boy (through the woman in her thirties, who ruled him) could handle all England! He actually suppressed Glastonbury, the most venerated shrine of the west. He compelled Dunstan to exile (who fled to Flanders oversea). He made great grants

Episode of Ethelgifu

Dunstan is exiled, 956

[1] "Eadwig" in the barbarous dialect of his own day.

out of the Domain. He appointed an Archbishop to Canterbury (who died on his way to Rome for the pallium)—and all this before he was twenty! For before he was twenty the inherited ill-health of all Alfred's race destroyed him in his turn.[1] He died on October 1st, 959.

While this wretched precocity was killing himself, the disgusted North set up his brother Edgar, also a child, as rival king north of Thames. It was in 957, and he but fourteen. The thing was the work of a great lord of the east, the "Half King" Ethelstan, *Comes* or "Ealdorman" of East Anglia, who had been the most powerful man in England for nearly twenty years. He stood by St. Dunstan also. That genius was recalled from overseas, made Bishop of Worcester in that very year, 957 (he had declined such office hitherto), of London two years later.

But returns under Edgar

is Bishop of Worcester, 957, then of London, 959

The moment Edwy died, Edgar, now sixteen, was acclaimed King of all England, and the first act of the Magnates who ruled in Council was to give the Archbishopric of Canterbury to St. Dunstan. He held it for twenty-eight years, that is, from 960 to his death in 988.

then Archbishop of Canterbury, 960

This was the chief, the creative, phase in Dunstan's long life, and during it he transformed the Church. The monasteries revived, the regulars replaced the secular clergy in the cathedral chapters, and the revived discipline took root with papal authority already backing it. The irregular marriages of the clergy dwindled, eliminated see by see, and the whole life of England became knit again and wholesome—for that brief time; later the work was to be ruined. Dunstan's effect on English religion was, unfortunately, not permanent. He was a forerunner. The Continent had not

in which post he works his great reform of the Church, 960-988

[1] What a list! Egbert himself may have reached 70 years, but his son dies in middle age, and of the four kings, his grandsons, only Alfred survived youth, and *he* died at fifty, having suffered a mysterious disease all his life; his son, Edward the Elder, dies at much the same age. Edward's son, Athelstan, dies at forty-six; *his* half-brother, Edmund I, dies of violence at twenty-five; and Edmund's sons die of illness, one before twenty, the other at thirty-two: the miserable Edwy at twenty, and the dwarfish Edgar at thirty-two.

yet come into line with his zeal, and the lay corruption stole over the Church in this island again during the chaos of the next invasions. St. Dunstan not only restored, for a moment, the Church; he also made his King great in state as he was little in body—for Edgar was dwarfish. There was a very late but splendid unction and coronation at Bath, the model of future ritual, and a claimed and admitted overlordship to all Britain, which was symbolized in the famous scene upon the Dee, at Chester, just after, when the Kings of North Wales, South Scotland, and the Isles rowed him in his barge as he steered. The reign was a strange interlude of peace with a sort of provincial splendour. It ended too soon. Edgar died, not yet thirty-three, on July 8th, 975.

Edgar's crowning at Bath, A.D. 973

The ceremony at Chester

Edgar dies, A.D. 975

His young son Edward succeeds

He left two young boys. The elder, Edward, the son of his first wife (now long dead) was thirteen years old; the younger half-brother, by his second wife, was Ethelred, a child of seven: both were destined to disaster.

and is murdered, A.D. 978

Edward in three years was murdered—almost certainly at his step-mother's orders. It was down at Corfe, in Dorset, where the lad (he was not sixteen) had ridden to visit her and his little half-brother Ethelred. As he drank his horn of wine in the saddle on his arrival, he was surrounded and stabbed. Under such auspices did the child Ethelred accede; but the dead boy was called "The Martyr." It was April 14th, 978. A month later the child Ethelred, ten years old, was crowned at Kingston. St. Dunstan (with Oswald of York) consecrated the little head, but prophesied what tragedies were to come, for all his life this unique and marvellous man had revelation of things distant in space and in time, and his happy spirit, full of the artist, metal-worker, lover of tunes, and gay, lived on the edge of this world: the good and the evil of the unseen supported and attacked him, as they do such few as are placed on the outposts of humanity.

Edward's half-brother Ethelred (later called "The Unready") succeeds, A.D. 978. Dunstan's prophecy

The murderous mother had the training of the boy. His beginnings were ominous. He had been crowned two

years when the first of the new Scandinavian raids struck, in 980. They came to Thanet, to Southampton Water, to the Dee. Slight, but a warning. They came again, to Devon (near Padstow) in 981-982. Then there was a lull.

In 988 the great Dunstan died, and in that same year the Danes from Ireland raided Somerset. Ethelred, now a man, was learning his fate. He had no tenacity to meet it. He had great energy but it was sporadic and undirected, and he ruined his house.

Death of Dunstan

In 991 the first main blow of the new series was delivered. Olaf of Norway, the Christian king, came with a great fleet into the rivers of Suffolk. He sacked Ipswich, he landed his crews at Maldon, in the muddy estuary of the Blackwater (then called the "Planta"). The levy of Essex, with Brithnot (the *Comes* of the county) at its head, met them and was overwhelmed. The invaders were bought off; but this famous Battle of Maldon opened the long series which was to end in the rule of Danish kings over England.

Olaf, the Christian king of Norway, attacks England

Battle of Maldon, 991

TABLE SHOWING *DYNASTIC STRUGGLE* FOR KINGSHIP OF ENGLAND BETWEEN DANES INCORPORATED INTO CHRISTENDOM, FRENCH NORMANS, AND THE DESCENDANTS OF ALFRED

1001-1066 (65 YEARS)

FRENCH OF NORMANDY		ENGLISH		SCANDINAVIAN
Richard II., Duke of Normandy since 996 (son of French Princess, Hugh Capet's daughter), marries his sister *Emma* to Ethelred	1002	*Ethelred*, king of England, marries *Emma* of Normandy. General massacre of Danes	1002	*Sweyn* (of the Forked Beard) married to a Polish wife, has a son, *Canute*, 4 years old.
		Edric, chief English noble, favours Danes	1009	
Ethelred and *Emma* refugees	1013	*Sweyn* invades England. Ethelred flies to France. *Sweyn* is king in England. Dies. *Canute* k. of English Danes	1013	*Sweyn* and young Canute (15 years old) invade England. Dies in
			1014	England. His son *Harold* succeeds in Denmark.
Ethelred returns to England	1014	*Ethelred* returns. His son *Edmund* shares the rule with *Canute*, who goes to Denmark, but fails to be king there	1015	*Canute* lands in Denmark, fails to oust his brother Harold, and returns to England.
		Canute returns to England		
		Ethelred dies	1016	
		His son *Edmund* (Ironside) dies, and *Canute* is sole k. of England. Edmund's children exiled	1017	
Emma marries *Canute*	1018	*Canute* marries *Emma*	1018	
		Godwin, chief English noble, marries Canute's sister-in-law, and goes with him to Denmark.	1019	*Canute* lands in Denmark, but is not king. Returns.
		Canute returns to England		
		Is chosen k. of Denmark also	1022	*Canute* k. of Denmark.
		Sails with English nobles to conquer Norway	1025	Fails to conquer Norway.
Richard II. dies, his son *Richard III.* succeeds	1026	Visits Rome	1026-27	
Richard III. dies, his brother *Robert* succeeds	1027	Conquers Norway	1028	Conquers Norway.

Robert, Duke of Normandy, dies leaving a son *William*, 9 years old	1035	*Canute dies*	1035 *Magnus* is made king of Norway.
		Harold Harefoot, Canute's bastard, k. of England	
Alfred, son of *Emma* and *Ethelred*, goes to England	1036	Alfred, son of Emma by Ethelred, lands and is killed	1036
Emma takes refuge in Normandy		*Emma* flies to Normandy	1037
		Harold Harefoot dies. *Hardicanute, Canute's* legitimate son by *Emma*, is k. of England	1040
		Hardicanute dies	1042
Edward (The Confessor), brother of Alfred and elder son of Ethelred by Emma, is made King of England. He is French speaking and French trained, and his court at Westminster is French	1042	*Edward* (The Confessor), French in training and speech and with a French court, becomes king of England	1042
		Marries *Godwin's* daughter	1044 } *Magnus* threatens to invade England. 1045 }
			1049 *Magnus* dies.
		Godwin's candidate for Archbishopric of Canterbury fails, and a Frenchman, Robert, is elected. *Godwin* attempts civil war, fails, and flies	
		William of Normandy visits England	1051 *Harald Hardrada* succeeds to Norway.
		Godwin returns, becomes master of the king, appoints his sons *Harold* and *Tostig* to rule England with him	1052
Harold in Normandy takes the oath to *William*	1065	*Harold* goes to Normandy, and takes oath to let *William* be king of England after *Edward's* death	1065
William invades England, conquers at Hastings (Harold killed), and is king		*Edward dies. Harold* makes himself king. *Tostig*, with help of *Harald Hardrada*, invades England, tries to oust him and is defeated. *William* lands, defeats Harold, and is king	1066 *Harald Hardrada* invades England and fails.

VI

The End of the Dark Ages

A.D. 991–A.D. 1066

75 Years

VI

THE END OF THE DARK AGES

(A.D. 991–1066—75 YEARS)

FROM THE BATTLE OF MALDON, 991, TO THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS, OCTOBER 14TH, 1066

THE end of the Dark Ages in England is one more of those critical passages wherein this country hung between civilization and barbarism. It preserved the essentials of Europe. The creed survived. The sacraments were not lost. The Mass was continuous, perhaps in every parish, certainly in much the greater number. England, which had planted Scandinavia with the Catholic Faith, had not wholly exhausted herself in the effort against these pirates, and it was her salvation that the pirates, by the time they conquered, were already half within the unity of Christendom.

But it was a close issue. The incompetent North might yet have maimed England permanently and left her of small future account in Europe. From such a fate she was rescued by the final incorporation with Europe which followed the Norman Conquest.

Once more, it is the lifetime of a man—seventy-five years.[1] Once more our fate prevailed, Europe triumphed, and Britain fully re-entered the high unity of Christendom.

The period opens with the disaster of Maldon, where the new Scandinavian powers, already half converted, already

[1] A choir boy of Ely remembering Brithnot and Maldon might have lived as an old man to hear of Hastings.

in touch with the full life to the south, destroyed the British defending force and began a struggle, now no longer of raids, but of kings and dynasties, which was to end in making Scandinavian kings the masters of Britain. Within twelve years their challenge was preponderant, within twenty-three their victory was won. England was ruled for a generation, from 1014 to 1042, by foreign barbaric kings from the empty North.

But the barbarian cannot govern. Though the interlude of Canute gave nineteen years of peace (1016-1035), that great man's success in regimen was an accident, for he was but half tempered to Europe, soft iron not yet steel. He had not the tradition nor the instruments of polity. He had not to his hand the discipline of our culture. Therefore, under his sons, the savage welter grew worse.

It was checked, but not dominated, by the accession of Edward the Confessor in 1042. The long reign of that Saint, though it made men more and more familiar with full civilization by an influx of French administrators and manners, was overshadowed by the ceaseless menace, the recurrent action, of uncouth anarchy. A clique of very wealthy men—Godwin's family at their head—struggled savagely for personal income and power, without a trace of corporate responsibility or traditional loyalty. On Edward's death Godwin's son Harold, the last of this clique, seized the throne. Had he retained it the chaos, which begins again at once with his usurpation, would have risen to a flood, and England might have failed to retain her place. There might have been a Europe without England: or at least, with England no more than an outer island.

Happily Harold's experiment lasted not a year. Before its close William, Duke of Normandy, St. Edward's cousin, the greatest leader of Christian culture and order in that day, the true type of Europe, had made good his claim by the battle at Hastings and was crowned king. From that moment onwards England is one realm, framed in a unifying

dynasty which endures, possessed of a strong coherent administration, of institutions henceforward rooted, and of arts which develop uninterruptedly and bind the commonwealth together. There is no more possibility of barbaric influence, of pirate anarchy, or of a break-up into petty kingdoms. Mastery has returned. The Dark Ages are over and the mediæval day has dawned.

. . . . . .

This stretch of seventy-five years falls naturally into two parts: the first a longer one of fifty-one years, from Maldon to the Accession of St. Edward the Confessor—it is the time of Scandinavian dominion, and may be called the "Danish Conquest;" the second, a shorter one of twenty-four years, is the reign of the Saint and the infiltration of the Normans.

The first section has four marked divisions:—

(1) From Maldon to the massacre of St. Brice (and the beginning of Norman influence).
(2) From the massacre of St. Brice to Sweyn's making himself king.
(3) The interlude of Canute.
(4) The break-up under Canute's sons.

The second section has three divisions:—

(1) From Edward the Confessor's accession to the triumph of Godwin's clique in 1052.
(2) From that moment to Edward the Confessor's death on January 5th, 1066.
(3) From St. Edward's death on January 5th, 1066, to Harold's death at Battle on October 14th, 1066.

(A) The Danish Conquest: 991-1042—51 Years

(1) Ethelred's resistance, 991-1002—11 years.
(2) Sweyn's victory, 1002-1014—nearly 12 years.
(3) The interlude of Canute, 1014-1035—21 years.
(4) Canute's sons, 1035-1042—7 years.

(B) St. Edward's Reign and the Norman Infiltration : 1042-1066—24 Years

(1) The attempt to stem anarchy, 1042-1052—10 years.
(2) The House of Godwin, 1052-1066—13 years.
(3) The usurpation of Harold, January, 1066-October. 1066—1 year.

(A) The Danish Conquest (991–1042)

(1) From the Battle of Maldon, 991, to the Massacre of St. Brice, November 13th, 1002: 11 Years

Maldon was the first capital disaster since Alfred had urned the tide a century before. But it was also a disaster of a new kind, for there now stood behind the Scandinavian hips powerful kings of countries half-civilized, that is, half-Catholic, and claiming a part in Christendom. They ould pretend to rule over Christian men. They were to laim, within a few years, the throne of England itself.

Nature of Scandinavian victory at Maldon

In this stress the example of Alfred was followed. The Archbishop of Canterbury (Sigeric) first got leave to purhase peace for his own district by a gift to the invaders, ext, in company with the learned Patricius Fabius (Ethelvard), advised Ethelred the King to a certain policy which ame indirectly to be of great effect on our history, fiscal nd political. We must return to that policy, for it has been isunderstood.

Sigeric of Canterbury buys off the Danes

It was the policy of the Danegeld, which I have already escribed: "a regular tax for the payment and hire of the candinavians." A tax levied on all England with the bject of raising a fund for (*a*) buying off the raiders; (*b*) inorporating in the English state such as would remain.

Character of the Danegeld

It was *not* a piece of weak panic. It was not a mere uying off for the moment of an enemy who would thus be ttracted to return: nothing so silly. It was part of a onsidered plan which failed partly because the barbarian ill not keep faith, partly because England was still divided

into separate governments, and the social structure of each was weakening under the separate ambition and greed of its local governor. The plan was to incorporate the Scandinavian ship-crews ; to give them a regular place in England ; to use their strength for the common purpose. Since these northern foreigners would come—and nothing but conquest of *their* homes (an impossibility) could stop them—let them be used and absorbed. A purchased peace was the immediate object, but it was not the soul of this new policy, of which, as we have seen, Alfred had been the author.

The Danegeld had also this incidental character, of vast moment to posterity. It was the first *regular* and *permanent* tax for the purposes of a central government. It was continued long after the Danish peril was forgotten, and it familiarized men with the habit of a direct fiscal bond between themselves and a national executive. Though the national organism was too weak to benefit fully by such an institution, though the end of the Dark Ages in England is a breakdown, yet this novel habit of a tax prepared the way for that Norman kingship which later made England really one at last. That task accomplished, the Danegeld had fulfilled its function, and within a lifetime after the Battle of Hastings the tax, with its dwindling revenue, disappeared.

Its fiscal effect

A treaty was drawn up with the Scandinavians, settlement assigned to their few thousands, and their armed strength was hired to defend the island. The system partially—but only partially—failed. It partially failed on three accounts : (*a*) The barbarians would not keep faith ; (*b*) the Court of Wessex and the whole simple fabric of English society was rotten with private greed and private rivalries ; (*c*) the hiring and pacifying of one body of pirates had no effect on another, and behind this first vanguard of the new invasion—even if it should keep faith—were the large forces of the two northern kings of Denmark and Norway, ready to invade and untouched by the treaty.

The Danegeld is not wholly successful

Yet—as we shall see—the policy of the Danegeld did found a sort of precarious balance: what bred the final disaster was not the Danegeld, but the massacre of St. Brice.

The very next year, 992, the new Danish subjects of Ethelred were again at war with him. The King's fleet moved against them in the Thames to surprise them at anchor. It was commanded, among others, by Alfric, one of the rich men whose personal ambitions mark all this break-up of Wessex for a lifetime. He joined the enemy, and the northern coasts were ravaged.

Treason of Alfric, 992, typical of the new feudal chaos

Two years later, in 994, came the main assault. Sweyn Forkbeard, of Denmark, Olaf of Norway, came down upon the Thames with ninety-four sail—say five or six thousand men—and attacked London. They failed before the Roman walls and the militia of citizens, and the saving of the town was referred by the English—like that of Paris a century before by the French—to the Holy Mother of God. But the two kings sailed out to ravage the south-eastern coasts and even raid inland, and on them, as on the earlier raiders, the policy of the Danegeld took effect; this time with more success. They took some thousands of pounds, and promised to leave the land at rest. Olaf kept faith. He was a sincere convert to the Faith. He visited the court of Wessex (at Andover), accepted confirmation, promised peace to England, and sailed away. Sweyn, more barbaric, baptized indeed, but apostate for the time, yet also left the island. A remnant of ships'-crews remained established on Southampton Water, under minor chiefs; individual captains taking English pay. It was with these as with their governors. It proved impossible to keep them to the treaty of the Danegeld. They would break out with a few ships and ravage the coasts from time to time. But the main attack was, for the moment, over.

Olaf and Sweyn attack London, 994, and fail

and form a truce

For eight years—from 994 to 1002—England had no real war. A few pirate ships ravaged here and there, but

the bulk of the land was at ease; councils were regularly held, some stability had returned.

In the year 1002, he being then a man of thirty-four, somewhat capricious but of vigour, ruling, however, over a dissolving society where a few rich men were masters, Ethelred did two things of moment to the Story of England. He married a princess of Normandy; he attempted to destroy the foreign Danish element in the island. Both acts were part of one new policy, which was, to challenge the Danish power, and to rely in future upon the high French civilization beyond the Channel.

Ethelred marries Emma of Normandy, A.D. 1002 and massacres the Danes

That Roman province of Gaul once called the Second Lyonnesse [1]—now called Normandy—was the wealthiest, best governed, strongest, and most highly cultured of all the French provinces. It consisted of the old five tribal groups—now the five dioceses—of Coutances, Avranches, Lisieux, Evreux, and Rouen. It had obviously had a unity of its own from long before history begins; for the Roman administration of Diocletian had recognized that unity in the late third century by confirming as a separate province—the Second Lyonnesse—what had long been a Roman administrative division based on the natural limits of five (perhaps confederated) Gallic tribes [2]: the ancestors of the men later, and to this day, called "Normans." More than a century before, bands of Scandinavians had raided through it right up to Paris, had failed before the town, had asked for a settlement and had been taken into the system of Gaul as settlers and armed subjects—the last example of a policy which had been regularly at work since Constantine. Their leader, Rollo, was made General, "Dux," of his forces, by the Emperor. He had the administration of the province, and founded a house. His nobles, some few score, took over land,

Origin of the name and Duchy of Normandy

[1] *Lugdunensis Secunda*, in the final administrative re-arrangement of the Empire.

[2] The Bishoprics marked the limits of these tribes.

intermarried with the immensely more numerous Gallic owners of estates, and merged at once into the governing class of densely peopled and very fertile lands. His common soldiers—they at the most may have been as many as 20,000 [1]—were dissolved, of course, at once in the myriads of lesser freemen, serfs, and slaves, which made up the great bulk of the population. As immemorial custom decreed, the district took on the name of its distinctive armed force, small though that was, and of its chief.[2] They, on their arrival, were the "Northmen," "Normans," and the Second Lyonnesse became known from its ruling house as "Normannia." Its people, and especially its gentry, were (and are) in sharp contrast with Scandinavians. They were short in stature,[3] regular in habit, and of high organizing energy.

I have said that of all French provinces Normandy was now the strongest and the best. Possibly this slight admixture of foreign blood had made the change; two things often unite to make a totally different third; perhaps a succession of strong and clear-headed monarchs had done more. At any rate, Normandy was at this moment at the head of our Christian culture. There was a strange contrast between these well-ordered, powerful towns and manors under a vigorous central rule from Rouen, these learned peaceful monasteries, great buildings

[1] A force of 20,000 was never reached by a mere raiding Scandinavian fleet. The one exception we have seen is the attack on Hamburg, close at hand, in what was apparently the full levy of whole kingdoms. Our numbers are given us by the numbers of ships when these are mentioned: each *large* ship 30 to 50: later the *very largest* 80 men: the average certainly below 50, as we have seen.

[2] So "Lombardy," "Brittany" it would seem, from an early British garrison, rather than from British exiles, possibly (but improbably) Andalusia, the ephemeral "Gothia," "Francia," Burgundy, etc., all take their names from a few thousand of a garrison, or rather from the tribal name of the general commanding; the population in the mass is hardly affected by the small garrison, which it absorbs, remaining what it was before.

[3] We know that the Germans fighting in Italy ridiculed the short stature of the Normans.

of stone, exact, full of Roman tradition, and the distracted society lying only a few hours' sail to the north across the narrow channel. All the tradition and civilization of England looked to Normandy. Normandy was the obvious model and support over against the ceaseless storms of barbarian raiding which more and more ruined this island, and the new shameful treasons and civil broils of its rich men.

Emma of Normandy is wholly French in training

It was in the Lent of 1002 that Ethelred married Emma, the daughter of Richard, Duke of Normandy, Rollo's grandson. She was three-quarters French in blood, and—what was of more effect on England—wholly French in character and training. Her *grandfather*, as a child, had heard the last rare relics of Scandinavian talk among the survivors of the original small force of Rollo, and could still recognize it. *Her* generation had forgotten all such things. Her mother was a Capetian of Paris, of the great House of Paris, and Ethelred's alliance was with Gaul.

The young wife brought in her train not only a number of her fellow-countrymen and women (to one, Hugo, called "The Frenchman," she gave the government of Devon and Exeter, the revenues of which city were part of her dower), but, what was more important, the new French influence. She opened the door to those examples of management and order of which civilization is made, and which were a lure indeed to a people sacked and ravaged year after year by half-heathen northerners whom they loathed. For, whatever the few rich who were distracting the land might do by way of treason and alliance with the Danes, the mass of the English detested the pirate barbarian and the half-settlement in their midst of little Danish groups.

and introduces French influence to England

a counterbalance to the Danish peril

It was clear that the politic attempt to incorporate this small but odious alien body had failed. The King stood in dread of Danish conspiracy, and of domestic treachery all around him relying on such conspiracy. In the autumn of

this same year 1002 he struck a blow to be rid of it. He sent orders to his officials in town and shire. He unloosed the popular hatred. On St. Brice's Day, November 13th, he permitted a general massacre of the Danes.

The massacre of St. Brice's day Nov. 13th, 1002

The action raised a prodigious rumour throughout Northern Europe. Legend enlarged it fantastically. But it is certain that there was a widespread destruction of the Danish men, especially in London and the south; and some women perished also, for the fury of the common people raged.

A popular affair

Now among these certainly died, in a most cruel manner, Gunhilda, the sister of Sweyn Forkbeard, a woman settled here and married to a Danish subject of Ethelred's,[1] who also perished. The effect was huge. It brought all the weight of the now partly organized, mainly Christian Danish power against Britain.

Effect on Northern Europe

(2) The Conquest of England by Sweyn: November 13th, 1002, to February 2nd, 1014: not 12 Years.

Sweyn Forkbeard, the king, swore to be avenged for his sister Gunhilda. On the north-easter of the next year's spring, 1003, he set forth. His great fleet struck for Devon. As though to emphasize the duel between Scandinavian barbarism and continental influence in Britain, he seized and sacked that very town of Exeter which a Frenchman ruled. His host—some few thousand—pushed on into the heart of South England, torturing, burning, pillaging. No sufficient resistance was possible, because the small group of rich men round the coast fought each his own hand, often a Dane for Ethelred, an Englishman, secretly or openly, for Sweyn. The first English army gathered was betrayed by the feigned illness of one such, that same Ælfric who had

Sweyn lands in Devon and ravages inland, A.D. 1003

[1] This man, Pallig, is typical of the time. He was heavily beneficed by Ethelred, had sworn allegiance, yet in Sweyn's last attack he had joined the Danish king. And *then* at the peace was reinstated in Ethelred's favour.

played Ethelred false before in the matter of the first great fleet. Every fresh levy was defeated. The raids passed from county to county, with some winter intervals, year after year. All 1003, 1004, 1005, 1006 were filled with the savage horrors of these men: monasteries and churches destroyed, towns burnt, men, women, and little children murdered and maimed; abominable refinements of torture.

Sweyn is paid off in A.D. 1007

At last, in 1007, Sweyn, glutted with vengeance, took payment of 36,000 pounds of silver and sailed home.

Ethelred makes a great fleet, A.D. 1008-9

There was a respite. It was used by Ethelred, wisely,[1] to gather an overwhelming fleet. For the building and manning of it he levied ship-money on the whole land, and gathered this fleet at Sandwich[2] in the spring of 1009. How large it was we do not know, but larger than any armada contemporaries had seen: some hundreds of ships—for even a detachment came to 100 sail. It meant a force, perhaps, of 20,000 or 30,000 men, and is a proof of the development of Scandinavia under the influence of the new civilization which had reached it.

Even that wise experiment in policy, achieved at the cost of such a strain to the English, failed through the growing disintegration of English society. Ethelred was opposed in his own fleet. There was mutiny and desertion.

Appearance of the House of Sussex

The episode is of high importance, not only because it made possible the subsequent victory of Sweyn, but because it introduces that House of Sussex, independent nobles who overshadowed the Throne of Winchester for a lifetime and at last, for a moment, seized the crown.

[1] The epithet which we wrongly translate "Unready" is, originally, "redeless," i.e. "without guidance," "without advice," "without a policy." It is not quite just. Ethelred was capricious, but more unfortunate than capricious. He had to serve his wealthy feudatories, who ceaselessly betrayed him.

[2] Then still the chief port of England, the heir of Roman Richborough. It is difficult to guess at the roadstead. All or nearly all is to-day dry land. But I may suggest the Wensum, still broad through shoaling, Richborough island not yet joined to the mainland, and shelter eastward from Thanet, southward and westward from a tongue of land projecting into the estuary of the Stour.

A commander of one detachment—perhaps a score of ships, and presumably of ships drawn from the ports of Hastings, Seaford, Shoreham, Bosham, and Arundel River—was one *Wulnoth*. His origin is uncertain, our authorities somewhat contradictory and confused, but we can finally piece together this much: he was heir to some hereditary government of Sussex, he was "The Child"[1] of Sussex. Ethelred had about him an adventurer whom he had raised to the government of Mercia—one Edric. Edric's brother, Brihtric, accused Wulnoth of intended treason. Whether the accusation was true or false, Wulnoth deserted with twenty ships and began to ravage the coasts as a pirate. Brihtric with eighty sail followed to capture the rebel, but his detachment was caught in a fierce storm, driven on shore, and the wrecks burnt by Wulnoth's men.

Wulnoth of Sussex betrays his king, A.D. 1009

The numerical loss alone was very serious; the suspicion of treason everywhere still more so. Ethelred landed; sundry of his doubtful commanders followed. The remaining crews sailed round the North Foreland, took their vessels up the Thames, and disbanded. The attempt to form a permanent defence was at an end.

End of Ethelred's great fleet, through the treason of Wulnoth

Sweyn took immediate advantage. His engagement, on his receiving the payment of 1007, seemed to bind him against appearing in person, but he encouraged, one may say he *sent*, Thurcyll to make war: and Thurcyll for three years ravaged the south and east, from Lyme Bay to the Wash. The year 1009 was filled with loot and burning in the Channel; 1010 with the ruin of East Anglia; in 1011 came the worst blow; the sack and burning of Canterbury, the massacre of its people, the murder of the Archbishop, St. Elphege. Then Thurcyll took money—more even than Sweyn had had—and he and his forty-five ship-crews entered the service and allegiance of Ethelred. This was in 1012. They remained supporting Ethelred to the end.

Thurcyll, the Dane, ravages from Devon to the Lincolnshire Wash, 1009, 10, 11

[1] It is a term variously used elsewhere, but *usually* with a connotation of hereditary right to an estate, or province, or kingdom.

Whether in fear that Thurcyll would rival him, or in anger at his desertion to Ethelred, or, more probably, because the incident gave him his opportunity, Sweyn sailed the next year, 1013, in the spring, with a splendid fleet and the full host of Denmark, his ships glorious with gold and silver and carving of all kind. He openly announced that he had come to take the throne. He steered for Sandwich, failed to rally Thurcyll's men (his born subjects now in Ethelred's pay) and sailed north to the Humber. He brought his ships up the Trent and pitched camp at Gainsborough. Thence he set forth inland, and the fighting season, the spring and summer months of 1013, gave him all England. All the north submitted at once, and furnished him with horses and provisions. Oxford and Winchester yielded. He failed against the walls of London, which Ethelred defended with vigour, and Thurcyll also. He went slowly west, and at Bath was acclaimed king by all the notables of north, midland, and Wessex—King of all England. It was in part terror that did this. He had massacred pitilessly, and though now again professing the Faith, he had ruined the churches. It was partly exhaustion. It was more perhaps a confusion in the minds of all the wealthier men as to what the future would be—a desire to be on the winning side, and among the populace a longing for single rule.

Sweyn comes again, 1013, and sails up Trent

He is acclaimed King in West England

After this midsummer triumph of Sweyn's, London yielded to him. Ethelred in August sent Emma back to Normandy with his two little sons by her, Edward and Alfred. He himself later took refuge on Thurcyll's ships below London, sailed into the Channel by winter, and, after a Christmas delay in the Wight, crossed over to the court of his brother-in-law, Duke of Normandy, in the second week of January, 1014, leaving Sweyn undisputed king in England.

Ethelred flies to Normandy

But for three weeks only. Sweyn, at Gainsborough, in the first days of February, died, just as he was setting out for some raid on Bury St. Edmunds.

Death of Sweyn, 1014

There is a story attached to his death which rings true. The barbarian, baptized, apostate, half reconciled again, had had a singular hatred for the memory of St. Edmund, that martyred king of East Anglia whom the pirates had murdered a century before. It was a hatred born, perhaps, of the popular story which made St. Edmund the champion against the raiders from whom Sweyn came; perhaps of some forgotten personal incident, some insult received in the name of the Saint. At any rate, he had this mad dislike of the dead man. He levied a heavy tribute on St. Edmund's Church, and threatened torture if the monks defaulted. He was setting out for the place when he was seized, on horseback, with a fit or vision, shouted that Edmund was upon him in full harness, and then fell to the ground. He died some few hours after in great torment. An English woman, who may have loved him, had the body embalmed at her own charges and taken back over the sea to Denmark, to be buried with the old kings in Roskild. Story of Sweyn's death

(3) The Interlude of Canute (nearly 22 Years): Early February, 1014, to November 12th, 1035.

When Sweyn died, in the opening of February, 1014, he had by him his second son Canute,[1] a lad of about nineteen. The elder, Harold, was in Denmark, and there took the throne.

To Canute Sweyn had formally left the leadership in this island, and Canute was acclaimed King of *England* by the army and fleet—and Council we may suppose—around him. Canute

Canute (baptized under the name of "Lambert") was an exception among the Danish leaders. His Polish blood (his mother was a Pole) gave him greater fineness, generosity, and intelligence. His Catholic religion was well rooted.

His strong life of little over forty years—over twenty-one Nature of his reign

[1] The official Latin, and therefore only certain, form of the time is Canútus, with the stress on the second syllable.

in power, from his nineteenth year—has two phases : (*a*) One very short, of nearly three years, from his father's death to that of Edmund Ironside, at the end of November, 1016. It was his period of struggle and achievement ; (*b*) the other of all but nineteen years, during which he reigned undisputed and became a sort of Emperor over all the North Sea lands—Britain, Denmark, Sweden in part. In *that* long reign he had peace, and the years are not filled as are those of his early conflict.

(*a*)

To begin with those first three years. At the news of the death of Sweyn—a lad only remaining to succeed—the Council in London, that is, the great clerics and some few of the wealthier nobles, anticipated Ethelred's certain return by declaring for his claim. But they stipulated to bind him beforehand. He must rule in their interest "better" than he had. It was a bargain ; they even (according to one version) threatened to impose the power of the magnates upon him, and to allow him to rule only with their consent to details. Ethelred accepted, and returned, that Lent of 1014, to London. He acted immediately with vigour, marched north against the young Canute, and drove him from Gainsborough. A local massacre of the Danes settled in that countryside followed. Young Canute sailed south with his fleet, landed his hostages (mutilated) at Sandwich, and then started for Denmark.

Ethelred returns and drives Canute out

Had the governing part of England, the little knot of rich men, been less hopelessly corrupt, a national dynasty might have taken root once more. But it could not be. If we wish to understand what followed we must clearly grasp the social nature of the time. Ethelred, returning from the order, high civilization, and strong central government of his brother-in-law in Normandy, was back in an oligarchy of competing private interests, a group of men each making what he could for himself in the way of power and

but cannot rely on the rich English Feudatories

money: and these were the sole leaders left in a society shaken and riven by half a lifetime of abominable and ceaseless savage raids and of civil war.

There followed the episode of Ethelred's son, Edmund Ironside. Modern historians, thinking of the eleventh century as though it were the nineteenth, have made of Edmund Ironside's adventures a sort of national rally, of Edric's joining the Danes a sort of national treason, etc. It is all nonsense. The men of the time were in the welter of a dissolving social structure, and each snatched what he could. Some were more capable at this game, some less; some were fortunate, some not; but none of the leaders thought of two clear antagonists—the nation on the one side, the Danes on the other: *that* tradition was left to the obscure memory of the common people. To *them* the advent, years later, of some peace under Edward the Confessor was a godsend, and William the Conqueror, putting an end once for all to pirate invasion and domestic anarchy, was salvation.

The characters of the struggle

The figures in the coming struggle are Edmund Ironside (Ethelred's son by his first marriage), Ethelred himself, Canute, Edric (who had married Ethelred's daughter, Edmund's sister, and was the powerful Earl of Mercia), Sigefrith and Morcar, the Danish Earls of the boroughs in the mid-north, and that Danish Thurcyll, whose fleet Ethelred had kept in pay for so many years.

The massacre of the Northern Danish Earls, A.D. 1015

The confused melee opens with Edric's treachery. He murdered the Danish Earls Sigefrith and Morcar (still in possession of their governorships of the northern towns, including York and Chester) at a feast given by him during the general council at Oxford in 1015. Ethelred may have been privy to the murder. He had to keep the throne as best he could. Prince Edmund took the opportunity to marry the murdered Sigefrith's widow. She attracted him, but he acted in order to obtain Sigefrith's possessions and power in the North. His father refused him so dangerous a gift, and Edmund Ironside promptly rebelled and seized it.

Edmund seizes their land

Thurcyll joins Canute who sails for England

Meanwhile Thurcyll—fresh from receiving a large new payment from Ethelred—decided that Canute, on the whole, was the better horse, betrayed Ethelred, sailed to Denmark, and joined that king. Canute, with 200 ships, that is, some 3000 or 4000 men (remember how small the armies were !), sailed for Sandwich, failed to force a landing ; thence to Poole, and, raiding inland, pillaged Somerset and Dorset,

is joined by Edric

while Ethelred lay dying in Wilts. Edric and Edmund raised a combined army to meet Canute. That done, Edric deserted to Canute with *his* force (of Mercians) and brought over the remaining *Danish* ship-crews, which still remained in Ethelred's pay, though Thurcyll (as we have seen) had changed sides. It is clear that in all this you have no trace of national war—it is a scrimmage of individual leaders each on his own for private gain.

Wessex admits Canute as King, A.D. 1016

So 1015 ended. In the first week of 1016 (all Wessex having admitted Canute as king) Edric and Canute crossed the Thames at Cricklade to harry Edmund's land in the north. Ethelred—now too ill to command—took a force from London to help Edmund, feared treason, and withdrew it. The North was overcome by Canute and his English allies. London, where Edmund Ironside now took refuge, remained unconquered. Canute, with his English and Danes, was on his way down against London from the north by way of the west, where he went to rally his fleet and send it to the Thames. He was at Southampton when, within the

Death of Ethelred the Unready, April 23rd, 1016

walls of London, Ethelred died, on April 23rd, 1016 : he had done what he could. No man could govern with such an inheritance. Only a master from without could tame that pack.

Now here was Edmund Ironside, Ethelred's son by the earlier marriage, in London, and Canute, with most of England behind him, at Southampton. To enjoy peace at last, to put an end to so much agony, the obvious thing was

The National Council accepts Canute as king

to accept Canute, and this the Council of Bishops and great nobles—the *Concilium* (or Witan)—did. They left London

for Southampton, they swore allegiance to Canute, abjured the blood of Ethelred, and thought they had settled England at last.

They had reckoned without Edmund. That energetic man was like the rest of the leaders in his avarice and intrigue—he was their superior in vigour and military skill. He was prompt. He got up a council of his own in London while the regular national "Witan" was still at Southampton doing fealty to Canute. He had himself elected by this London council of his, probably left a lieutenant to prevent the town's surrendering to Canute, and then boldly went west to recruit an army, for he knew that Canute intended to sail up the Thames, and he saw his chance of a diversion. He relied for his recruitment in part upon his right of blood, and he was not disappointed. He got some little force together in the west, on the borders of Somerset and Dorset, while Canute was attempting to reduce London. The presence of that force made Canute raise the siege of London and come west—the two armies met at the point where Alfred had appeared in his famous resurrection two long lifetimes before, Penselwood. They were each small, but Edmund held his own. His partial success gained him new recruitment, mainly from Devon and Dorset; for whoever won would have wealth to distribute. He attacked again after midsummer at Seorstone—probably Sherston, in Wiltshire. Again he held his own against Canute and his own brother-in-law, Edric.

Edmund opposes Canute

and holds his own in the West

The latter was impressed. While Canute went back to attempt once more the reduction of London, Edric and his Mercian army approached Edmund and joined forces, for it looked as though Edmund might win. Edmund's command was, by this accession, probably doubled; Canute's was halved. It looked as though Edmund Ironside *must* win. His approach in such superiority of numbers made it impossible for Canute to continue the siege of London. Edmund defeated the Dane's army west of the town, at

Edric now betrays Canute and joins Edmund

Brentford ; he recruited his own force again to make up for losses, and pursued Canute's into Kent (where the Danish crews had landed after raiding the eastern coast). He decisively defeated them at Otford, and drove them into Sheppey.

who wins a battle at Otford in Kent

But with those small bodies a fleet's crews counted as strong reinforcement. Canute's command sailed over the Thames estuary, and after a strong raid into the heart of the land beyond, his ship-crews came to a place called Assandun—probably on the high land south of the River Crouch, where their boats lay. Edmund, toiling round by the longer way up the southern Thames shore and over London Bridge, came up with the Danish ship-crews at Assandun and gave battle. He was defeated. Edric gave way (accused, of course, of treachery), and there was heavy slaughter of the Danish and English nobles who served Edmund.

but is beaten at Assandun in Essex

Edmund himself escaped from Assandun with some small force, hurried west beyond the Severn, and recruited yet another little army, with Edric at his side. Canute followed. But instead of renewing a struggle in which neither seemed to get his fill of wealth and power, Edric and the Council persuaded a compromise. On the island of Olney, in the Severn, near Gloucester, Canute and Edmund Ironside agreed to these four points : (1) Edmund to be king in chief—a mere title ; (2) Edmund to hold England south of the Thames, also London, Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk ; (3) Canute to be king of all the rest ; (4) a sum of money to be paid for the maintenance of the Danish ship-crews.

Canute and Edmund meet on the Severn and compromise

Probably (but not certainly) (5) the survivor was to inherit all England—for the sake of peace.

The pact was of no historical effect, for on St. Andrew's Feast, November 30th, 1016, Edmund Ironside [1] died ; some thought by murder (and such a legend arose), but more likely

Death of Edmund Ironside, Nov. 30, 1016

[1] We call him "Iron-side" in modern England. His contemporaries called him "*Ferreum Latus*."

in the course of nature. They buried him in Glastonbury by the High Altar, on the epistle side.

(*b*)

Canute was twenty-two years of age—or thereabouts—when he thus obtained undivided rule over England. He showed a breadth in conception and skill and sureness in policy which was astonishing in a Northerner only a lifetime removed from sheer barbarism and in age a boy of twenty-two. His object was to rule. He exactly achieved it, and for nineteen years, till his death, he saved Britain from incident of history. It is his glory. He further acquired, finally, a full empire beyond the seas, his own Denmark, and Norway and part of Sweden, and all was done by a sure judgment. Canute sole king, 1016

Because he was of such weight in policy the episode can be briefly told, but we must note at its outset the plan he had made and maintained. We must further note the effect on England of this interlude of peace, for it rendered the renewed chaos and horror under his sons intolerable, lent weight therefore to the rapid growth of civilizing European influence from Normandy under St. Edward, weakened the short remaining reaction under the House of Sussex, and opened wide the door of opinion for receiving the Norman.

Canute's plan was, briefly, to rule England with the fullest *continuity*—he would have peace and strong government " with the grain " of the material to his hand, not against it. England—the mass of the people—hated the memory of heathen and half-heathen horrors: he would make them forgotten, he would use native men. Peace and prosperity lay in emphasizing the most civilized part of the realm and its connection with the Continent. He made Wessex his direct government, he married (in July, 1017) Ethelred's widow, the Norman Emma (known here as Canute's plan of Government

He marries Emma

Elfgiva), though she was certainly ten, perhaps twelve, years older than he. She left behind her in Normandy her two sons by Ethelred, Edward and Alfred, lads, not yet men: boys in their early teens. The line of Ethelred could not live in the England of Canute, but the Norman custody of Edward was to be of great moment to England. With a French mother, and with many Frenchmen and French speech about him in his childhood, he was now wholly French in environment. By the time he reached the throne (twenty-five years later) he was French through and through.

who leaves Ethelred's son Edward, later the Confessor, to be brought up in Normandy

So much for Canute's marriage. But his policy went further. England was built up in four districts—Wessex, the North, Mercia, East Anglia—each with its traditions. He established their separate governorships. He found a kingship distracted by the power of a few rich. He met the peril not directly but in flank, by putting such men over each division, but separated: his brother-in-law, Eric, over Northumbria; Eadric, his late ally and the most powerful of the old clique, over Mercia, which had long followed him; Thurcyll over East Anglia, where the Danish settlement was of perceptible numbers. To these (and to others of the great) was confirmed the new Scandinavian title of *Earl*.

Canute's plan of the great earldoms

This first settlement did not last. Eadric—because his wife was of the English royal line, and his blood might disturb the succession—Canute caused to be executed on some pretext. Edmund Ironside's two little sons—babies—he sent out of the kingdom to Scandinavia (with orders, one story says, that they should be killed. They were sent on to safety under St. Stephen, the now Christian King in Hungary, and there brought up). Thurcyll, after a few years, he distrusted and banished. But his policy of the four Earldoms remained, and he ruled more and more by Englishmen. The chief of these was *Godwin*, of the House of Sussex.

Edmund Ironside's sons are sent into exile

Godwin climbs to power through the Danes

On an earlier page we saw the treason of Wulnoth, the "Child of Sussex," into history. Godwin was Wulnoth's son, and something in him appealed to Canute. He made

him Earl. When his brother of Denmark died (or was deposed) Canute, sailing to Denmark in 1019 for the throne, took Godwin with him, and there are legends of the Englishman's special powers which increased his state. The next year Canute abandoned the direct government of Wessex, and gave Godwin—then quite a young man like Canute himself—the *Earldom* of that kingdom. It was a half royal position, and Canute had already married him to a close connection, the sister of his own brother-in-law, Ulf the Dane. His Danish marriage

In that same year another minor name appears—that of Stigand. Canute appointed Stigand priest of an endowed church he had built on the field of Assandun, and in that connection we must specially note the greatest support of Canute's policy—his devotion to the Catholic Church. Stigand

There was far more sincere and personal force than craft in this public profession, but he had in mind (and expressed in a good phrase [1]) the three unities of all the great rulers, from Constantine on to whatever man shall at last reunite Europe: "One King, one God, One Creed." He founded and ennobled; he evangelized his Denmark (largely with Englishmen); he made (in 1027) his famous pilgrimage to Rome, and wrote thence his famous, naif, touching letter full of simple wonder at the great South. He worshipped at Glastonbury—especially at Edmund's tomb. He vigorously destroyed the little re-growths of degrading paganism in the North which the invasions had planted. Canute's religious basis

Canute was one of those considerable figures—Olaf is another, St. Stephen of Hungary another—through whom the tide of expanding Europe was met halfway. When the Faith had begun to build its way outward beyond the old Roman boundaries, the corner-stone of all had been

[1] At the head of his simple, childlike code, "Above all things one God . . . to love and to worship . . . one Christendom to keep together . . . and to love Canute the King."

the enforced conversion and civilizing of the Saxon savages by Charlemagne in the ninth century; but the thing was clinched by the appeal which civilization had for these barbaric rulers of the eleventh century; and of them, Canute, coming of stock evangelized by England, and with his ultimate North Sea Empire of Britain, Denmark, and Norway and the Swedish belt, was the greatest. He played the part of the Christian king strenuously, made the accustomed journey to Rome, imposed the Faith on his barbarians. In his childhood half the Scandinavian chieftains were still wavering between the blind northern past and the disciplined life of Europe. In the mid-century following his death the Mass was sung everywhere from the Eider to the Doverfeld.[1]

The other note of Canute's long reign was its peace—its interval of security for this island after so prolonged an anarchy. An incursion from Scotland [2] was quelled, the Highland leaders did some sort of homage: it is possible Macbeth was among them. Save for that distant northern expedition (in which there seems to have been no engagement) the whole territory of England, which had suffered almost to death, now enjoyed repose for nearly twenty years.

The effect of Canute

I have marked, above, the effect of this peace when I spoke of the way in which the security under Canute was a forerunner of the later order under William the Conqueror, thirty years after Canute's death. Canute's peace rendered the return of anarchy, or even mis-rule, intolerable to Englishmen. It made a precedent for strong central

[1] Here are two points at random. After the incident of the tide at Southampton he gave his crown to the great Crucifix in Winchester Cathedral. And again: "I had learned from my teachers that the Apostle St. Peter received from the Lord the great power of binding and loosing with the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. On this account I thought it highly useful to solicit his patronage with God."

[2] The occasion of this was the tenure of the Lake District. These mountains the Scots kings ruled, but only as vassals to the English. An attempt to annex was made by Duncan under the plea that Canute was a usurper.

government to which all men could look back as a sort of necessity when, once again, the quarrels and treasons of the rich houses (and particularly the falsity of Godwin and Harold his son) threw the life of England back into haphazard.

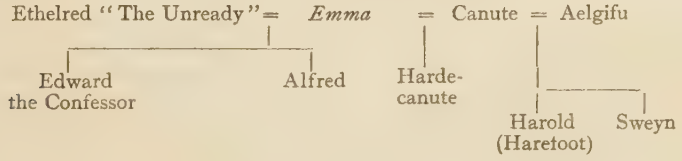
There grew up under Canute a generation which had practical experience of security: knew that the thing was possible. Older men who remembered the wars and the oppressions as youths were exasperated to find that the long ease of their manhood could be disturbed again in their old age when Canute was dead. Later still, after Godwin had imposed himself on Edward the Confessor, and yet later, under Harold, and just before Hastings, when the great Earls revived anarchy, the memory of Canute's peace made that anarchy unbearable. The very fact that Canute's exceptional character had imposed peace only so long as he was there, made men long for new arrangement of public life, a stronger organ of civilization which should make stability permanent. The memory of such a period of rest sharpened the appetite for civilized order. In every way, positive and negative, the interlude of Canute prepared the Norman influence under St. Edward: the disgust with Godwin and Harold: the Norman Conquest.

is to prepare the acceptation of the Conqueror

(4) The Seven Years' Welter—Canute's Sons: 1035–1042

The wretched time intervening between Canute's death and Edward the Confessor's accession is one of only seven years. But it gave a sharp object lesson in mis-rule.

To grasp its factors we must be familiar with the relationships shown in the following table:—



Canute died at Shaftesbury in 1035, still young—barely forty. He left, by Emma the Norman, one son, Hardecanute, a lad of seventeen; by a former concubine two sons a year or two older, Sweyn and Harold (Harefoot). Sweyn had been given Norway. Harold remained in Britain. The regular succession and the one best suited to continue Canute's English peace would have been that of Hardecanute; further, that succession had been agreed to in the marriage terms with Emma. But Hardecanute was in Denmark. The Danish standing force—Canute's bodyguard—declared for Harold (who had the name of "Harefoot," because he would follow a hunt dismounted and swift), as did the principal men of North England. The south hesitated between Hardecanute and the son of Ethelred, Edward, Emma's eldest-born, who was in Normandy, now a man of thirty-five, and, as we have seen, French in training and character. The mere death of one remarkable man, Canute, was enough to put everything English into disorder again. Edward crossed the Channel to Southampton with forty ships, hoping perhaps that his mother, from her palace at Winchester, would declare for him.

The Danish bodyguard gives the kingdom to Harold Harefoot, Canute's elder son

Edward (later the Confessor), Ethelred's son, fails

She preferred her son by Canute, and Edward sailed back to Normandy. A great council, held at Oxford, divided the kingdom between the two half-brothers, Harold Harefoot to have all north of the Thames *with London;* Hardecanute the south—Wessex (and Sussex and Kent). But Harefoot was the one King.

The National Council divides the kingdom between Canute's sons

But the heart of that decision was the old desperate trouble which Canute had banished for awhile, and which would have ruined England had not William of Normandy come in to end it: the motive of private gain, the intrigue and counter-intrigue of the few rich masters who cared nothing for the people and everything for themselves. For Hardecanute—a boy and hundreds of miles overseas—was not really in question. The essential was that the Earldom of Wessex—that is, its tribute, revenue, control—went to *Godwin*, with Emma as his associate.

but in Wessex the real power goes to Godwin,

Godwin was now in his maturity, past his fortieth year, and most powerful for mischief. The death of Canute had left Godwin and his Danish wife free to begin again that wretched partisan game of great private interests which had undermined England in the past, and under which she would wholly have collapsed in the future had not Harold happily lost the day at Battle. For the House of Sussex kept up civil division to the end: its last two sons could not keep their hands from the fiercest civil war between themselves right up to the eve of Hastings.

who, with his house, represents anarchy

Godwin's first act (and Emma surely connived at it!) was a renewal of confusion. Edward, Ethelred's son by Emma, had failed, as we have seen, at Southampton. His brother, Alfred, had made no venture. Godwin (and Emma?) in 1036 gambled with him in a fashion incredibly wicked. A letter, purporting to come from Emma—and perhaps really from her—urged her son Alfred to bid for the throne. He sought aid of Baldwin of Flanders, gathered a small force of 600, and sailed from Boulogne to Sandwich (where opposition forbade his landing), came round the Long-nose, and marched from the Thames shore by Reculvers to Canterbury. There Godwin received him and swore to support him (1036).

Godwin, with his Danish wife and half-Danish sons to succeed him, represented the opposing elements of division in England, and played on that cause of national weakness.

and plays on the conflict of Englishman and Dane

What followed was yet another of those counter-treasons which are typical of the dissolving society of this island at the close of the Dark Ages. Godwin lured Alfred (presumably along the Pilgrim's Way) to his own town of Guildford, and there—a thing impossible without some understanding between Godwin and the Court—Harold Harefoot's men came by night into the lodgings of Alfred and his men and caught them. They were bound, some enslaved, most of them killed with the most abominable tortures, worse even

Godwin betrays and murders Alfred, son of Ethelred, legitimate English claimant (1036)

than the worst the northern barbarians had yet used against the English. Alfred himself was kept alive for more terrible things, he was ridden naked through England, buffeted and insulted all the long journey into the fenland, there his eyes were torn out, and he died in a few days. Such was the dealing of Godwin with the younger heir of England.

The whole thing was typical of that horrible wreckage to which the rich families had reduced England. We are certain that Godwin designed and worked the detestable business—the Archbishop, the moment he was free, accused him. And though the Earl was acquitted formally by his own oath and that of his (and the King's) magnates, such a verdict of fellow conspirators is worthless.

To discover the *wherefore* of Godwin's fearful crime is, after such length of time, impossible. However, it is clear Godwin can only have had one of few motives in this trapping and betraying of the English blood royal to the Dane. Godwin may have acted for Harold Harefoot in luring Ethelred's son over to England. Or he may have intended to set him up as a puppet against Harold, and then betrayed him for a bribe, or because he found the experiment hopeless. At any rate, there was some further, obscure, inner treason between Godwin and Emma: perhaps Godwin had used her to write the letter which brought her son over; perhaps she *meant* it, and Godwin denounced her to the king.

Flight of Emma of Normandy

Emma fled overseas to the court of Flanders. But Godwin lost nothing. Ominously, he retained the King's favour, and when Harold Harefoot died, four years later, in 1040, he was still in the saddle: still master of all Wessex, and now—virtually—of England.

Emma was in Bruges when Harold Harefoot died. She urged Hardecanute, her own son by Canute, now of age, to come over from Denmark at once. He did so, and took the English throne—*but he also accepted Godwin*, who marked the new reign with a present to the new king: a splendid ship fully manned, heavily carved and encrusted with gold.

Young Hardecanute could do nothing to check the power of such men. He was mild and well meaning. He sent to Normandy for his half-brother Edward, and kept him by the court as a sort of heir, for he himself was physically of little account. Within two years of his landing, at a banquet in Lambeth, on June 4th, 1042, the young fellow was suddenly seized and died. It was the end of the Danish kingship in England—but not of Godwin, who had risen by the Danes.

Harde-canute

(B) Edward the Confessor and the Usurpation of Harold

(June 4th, 1042–October 14th, 1066—24 Years)

(1) *From Hardecanute's Death in mid* 1042 *to the Success of Godwin's Plot, at the close of* 1052, *ten and a half years*

Accession of Edward the Confessor [1042]

Edward, Ethelred's son, was in London when his half-brother, Hardecanute, died. He was the admitted and legitimate English heir. He was at once acclaimed king, Godwin supporting. He had also the new weight of Norman society behind him, after these seven years of turmoil; also, for what it was worth, the personal support of his cousin William, the young Duke of Normandy. And William of Falaise, though only in his sixteenth year, was already masterful. His voice was not to be despised.

To understand the critical twenty-four years that follow we must first understand what Edward himself was: on his character, its strength and lack, the period turned.

His appearance and character

He was at this moment (June, 1042) just in his fortieth year. Three elements combined in his composition. Physically he was of no commanding presence; in mind he was simple, and sometimes over simple; but spiritually he was a saint. It is this last and overwhelming character which we must grasp in order to appreciate his half-lifetime of reign. His complexion and carriage were heavy drawbacks. He was an albino, too stout, too gentle in manner. His intelligence moved slowly, was easily influenced in neutral decisions, suffered the influence of others. But behind all this was the strength of holiness. That is a quality which never fails (even when it exasperates) to awe mankind. It

gave St. Edward a secure throne; for the base rivalries of his court—and particularly of Godwin and his kin—never overcame the direct principle, and fervour in right, of their too-easily managed master. We may say that Edward the Confessor's holiness preserved the imperilled country of England over its last and worst ordeal until the Conquest came to confirm its unity for ever.

his popularity

This holiness not only influenced the detestable world of Godwin and the other magnates, it assured his power among the common people. King Edward was really loved, and his time and laws and personal administration were looked back to for centuries with legendary affection by the English, for whom things good and consonant to England were "as in the days of King Edward."

The French infiltration

Wholly French in training, speech, and every habit, as he was half-French in blood, the contrast between the Normandy of his youth and manhood, the distracted England of his reign, was strong. All who required order in England —the subjection of powerful men to the law, clear thinking, open dealing, and the rest of civilized government—demanded Norman aid; and Edward brought with him, of necessity, a group of Normans suitable to his task. Robert of Jumièges, the monk who was first his chaplain, then Bishop of London; Edward's nephew (his sister's son), Radulf of Mantes, and others. Their presence was irksome to the wrangling magnates, Danish, and half-Danish, and native, for their presence menaced all rebels with an advent of order and strong central rule.

The three "Jarls" ("Earls") Siward, Leofric, and Godwin

Next to Edward himself we must note the positions of Godwin, Siward, and Leofric: the three "Jarls" (a Danish title) or "Earls," as the anglicized form was: Godwin, of the House of Sussex, by far the most powerful. These three ruled—unfortunately for England—as lesser kings, but without stability, not nationally, for themselves and their families alone: there was not even an acknowledged hereditary succession to the earldoms, such as would have made for great

provinces, like those of France, combining to nourish a strong kingship over all. This was later an advantage, for it made the English monarchy unquestioned after the Conquest, and formed its power earlier than its continental rivals. But for the moment it was a weakness. Leofric held the northern Midlands; Siward had all the north from the Humber; but Godwin (with his sons) controlled and taxed much the most of English wealth. He himself still held the revenues of Wessex, and Kent, and Sussex as well, and (we may say—though it was half-independent) London; of his young half-Danish sons by that Danish wife of his, the one, Sweyn, held all the southern Midlands from the Thames to Leicester, and from the Welsh hills to beyond the Chilterns; the other, Harold, had the government and revenue of the eastern part, Middlesex and Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge.

Godwin and his sons govern three-quarters of English wealth and population

Next, after the great "Jarls," note the position of Emma, the Norman Queen Mother. She remained in her palace of Winchester, at issue with her son Edward, refusing him aid, suspect in the matter of her own son, Alfred's murder, and living apart. She was now a woman of nearly sixty—she lived on for another ten years—shorn by Edward of most of her wealth, and impotent for further harm.

Position of Emma of Normandy

Lastly, not in England, but visiting it and growing to be chief man of his time, looming in the background of all that happened in England, was the figure of William, the Bastard of Falaise. He was the acknowledged, though illegitimate, son of Robert, Duke of Normandy, Emma's nephew: the great contemporary of Canute. William of Falaise had been supported to the throne of Normandy, on his father's death (when he was but a child of eight), by the power of the French king. He was shortly, by the victory of Val-ès-Dunes, which the King of France won for him over his rebels, in his nineteenth year, to become the full Master of the Duchy and the greatest captain of the West: the type of its highest culture. He was closely bound up

and of William of Normandy

by education, blood, and a common training with St. Edward, his father's first cousin.

The whole situation is dominated by the new Capetian Monarchy in France

Behind all this—the dominant institution of the time—was the new Capetian Monarchy of France. The final formation of that institution, slowly growing during the period of Alfred's successors, was the starting-point of the Middle Ages. It re-awoke the conception of nationality: it gave a model to Europe. Its Paris court and its vassals formed the tongue and the ideas which moulded all the West for centuries.

The Capetian monarchy had originated in the defence of Northern Gaul against the pirates by one of the Gallic *Comites*, a certain Robert, *Comes* of Anjou and Paris, of unknown origin. His son, Eudes, had saved Paris from the pirates much as, and a decade later than, Alfred had saved Wessex. Eudes' son, Hugh the Great, married to Athelstan's sister, had exercised a power which was in effect regal, though nominally still subject to the last decaying authority of Charlemagne's descendants.

At the very end of the tenth century the fruit was ripe, and the French kingship was declared, with Paris for its capital. The newly civilized German belt was no longer governable from Gaul, and fell away. With that German, eastern belt the title of Emperor went off into a strange adventure, attached to German-speaking chieftains of the East, who claimed connection with the blood of Charlemagne through the women, but who had no capacity for the universal idea of Europe. The name "Empire" still moved men's minds and excited a vague conception of "all Christendom," but the reality corresponding to it had disappeared. The foredoomed and unnatural claim of such outer men to a vague headship over central Europe (and even Rome!) was destined to be exhausted in a losing battle of 300 years against the strength and clarity of the Italians, whom it pretended to rule, and against the might of the Church. Opposed to it was, in the West, this very vivid

Causes of power of new Capetian Monarchy

reality of a French Realm: a crowned head in Paris, the true heir of that Monarchic Idea which is our chief temporal legacy from Rome. Its great vassals, Normandy, Flanders, Brittany, Anjou, Aquitaine, were wealthier, and had more men than their sovereign. They could act *almost* as independents. None the less, their very titles—less than kings—proclaimed the majesty of a supreme kingship above them, making Gaul one. And this unity was summed up in the Capetian House.

Origin of name "Capetian"

It is called "Capetian" because Hugh the Great's son, Hugh *Capet* (Hugh of the Helm), was first crowned king. It was in 987—the year before Dunstan died—the moment when the new Reform of the Church was stirring underground, and the Middle Ages were about to be born.

We have seen how Emma of Normandy was the link between England and the southern shores of the Channel. But, important as it is to appreciate Emma of Normandy's position in this generation, and the way in which her marriages and character furnish a key to the dynastic movement, there is another woman who plays a still greater part, and upon whom turn, as on a pivot, the northern governments, and particularly the great revolution whereby England rejoined European civilization in 1066.

This woman is Adela, the grand-daughter of Hugh Capet, the daughter of his son Robert, King of France, the sister of Henry I, King of France. Henry was the contemporary of Emma's brothers, the two Dukes of Normandy, Richard III. and Robert the Devil: all three of them children of Richard II of Normandy by a daughter of the Duke of Brittany. The Capetian monarchy being the political centre of all that time, on it hangs, as on a sort of central post, the story not only of the great feudatories lying within its orbit (Flanders, Blois, Normandy, Anjou, Brittany, Aquitaine), but also the history of this island at the close of the Dark Ages.

Position of Adela, Capetian Princess

The Capetian monarchy followed a policy of reliance

upon, and yet restraint of, the very great (and yet feudally subject) Norman power. When Robert the Devil left William the Bastard, his son, a minor, Henry, the King of Paris, and the feudal superior, confirmed that boy upon the ducal throne and won for him, as we have seen, the Battle of Val-ès-Dunes.

As William increased in power through the very aid which Henry the King of France had given him, it was necessary for Henry to re-act and to struggle against any further expansion of the Norman power, and, later still, after the great expansion to William's strength which came with the Conquest of England, Henry's son Philip had to pursue the same policy of restraint. But the note of the time was the support and consolidation of the Norman Duchy by its feudal superior, the Capetian King in Paris.

The Capetian Monarchy is the support of Normandy

Now the mark of this policy was the marriage of Adela, the French King's child-sister, to the young Duke of Normandy, Richard III. Richard III died very shortly after his accession (1026) — perhaps poisoned — and was succeeded by his brother, Robert the Devil (the father of William the Conqueror). Adela therefore remained no more than the widow of the last duke. Still, she was the aunt of the young heir, William, when Robert the Devil died. But here comes in the centre of the whole situation. Adela, after her Norman husband's death, had married Baldwin, the other great northern feudatory, the Count of Flanders. Therefore this great local sub-sovereign of Flanders, Baldwin V, was now uncle by marriage to Henry's heir, Philip, when the latter inherited the French throne at Paris as a minor in 1060.

Adela's connection by her two marriages with the King of France and Duke of Normandy

Observe the whole position and how powerfully it made for the success of William's conquest of England. Baldwin of Flanders, a grown man, and very powerful, ruling all the country to the east of Normandy and up into the Netherlands, overlord of the approaches to England from the Straits of Dover to the mouth of the Scheldt, is natural

protector to two young close relatives, the boy King of France, Philip: the boy Duke of Normandy, William. He is regent of France and, with his wife Adela, supporter of Normandy. He and his feudal dependents hold the other great northern power side by side with Normandy; and he, who is Flanders, and Normandy together are the controllers of the whole of the Channel coast opposite England.

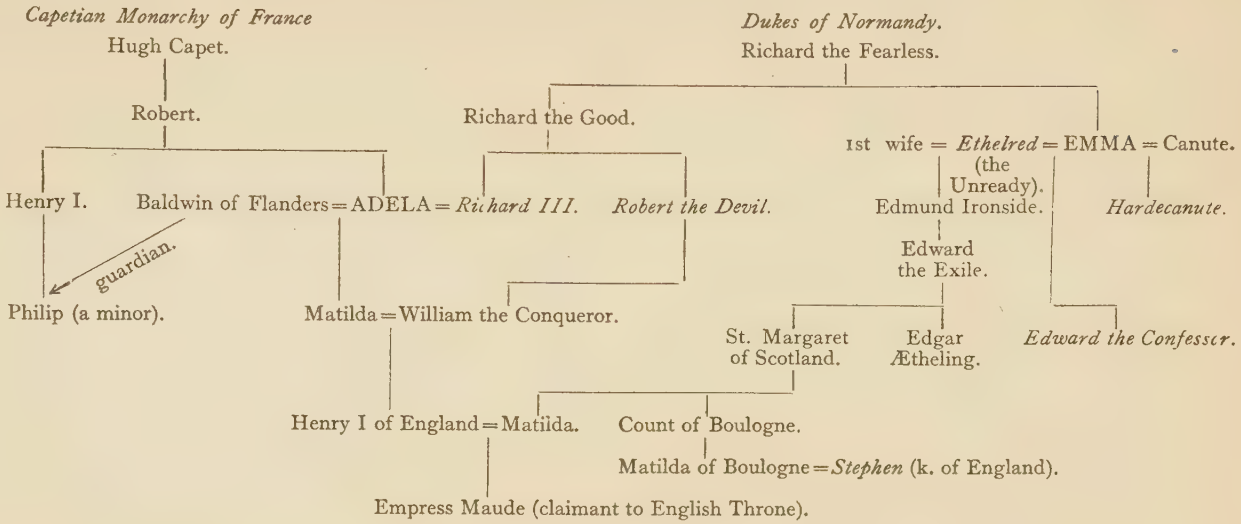
hence her husband, Baldwin of Flanders, is the master of Continental policy

I repeat: Baldwin governs the policy of the French monarch as regent. He is uncle by marriage to the young king Philip; he is also uncle by marriage to the young Duke of Normandy, William. On the top of that William married Baldwin's daughter, Matilda, so that William, who was already more or less under his protection as his nephew, comes into immediate relations with him as a son-in-law. Now Baldwin strongly supported the policy of the Conquest, and *it was through his marriage with Adela, sister of the King of France, that Baldwin was now the master of policy over the Channel: that policy led to the Norman Conquest.*

What with Adela married first to the Duke of Normandy and then to the Count of Flanders, and so bringing in the Capetian support, and what with Emma, another aunt of William's, having married in succession Ethelred, the King of England and Canute, the King of England, and being the mother of Edward the Confessor, King of England, the whole time turns upon these two Frenchwomen, Emma and Adela, and, of the two, Adela, a daughter of the Capetian House, is, of course, the more important.

The accompanying table will show the relationships at work, and it is worth while commenting upon it to show how the whole of that movement was a close family arrangement among a clique of great people, who between them settled the dynastic forces of Northern France and of this country. The situation was exactly the opposite of that often suggested in popular histories, to wit, an independent England with a sort of modern patriotism on the one hand, and another great independent power called

TABLE SHOWING CONNECTIONS OF ADELA OF FRANCE AND EMMA OF NORMANDY, AND THE ENGLISH AND FRENCH ROYALTIES OF THEIR KIN



Normandy over against it, and the one conquering the other. On the contrary, it was a set of arrangements or intrigues and counter arrangements between the members of one closely inter-related family group; and dominating them all is Baldwin of Flanders.

For here are the relationships. Edward the Confessor is half-brother to Edmund Ironside. He is uncle to the exiled Ætheling, Edgar; he is great-uncle to the boy Ætheling at the time of the Conquest and to St. Margaret, the Queen of Scotland. He is first cousin to William the Conqueror. He is step-son to Canute. He is brother-in-law to Harold. Again, St. Margaret of Scotland, Edmund Ironside's granddaughter, and the exiled Ætheling's daughter, is the mother of the Count of Boulogne; the grandmother of Matilda (who marries Stephen, King of England), and the mother-in-law of Henry I, King of England.

The close relationships of the rulers

William the Conqueror is first cousin, once removed, of Edward the Confessor; nephew of Emma and nephew by marriage of Canute and of Ethelred; he is son-in-law of Baldwin of Flanders, having married his first cousin, Matilda, the daughter of his aunt, Adela, the sister of the King of France. His wife Matilda is the first cousin of the French King, Philip, Henry's son. William is the father-in-law of the great Count of Blois, and therefore the grandfather of that Stephen who becomes King of England. The Ætheling, to whom William of Normandy showed so much honour and took about with him, is not some foreign English prince to whom the Norman showed a quixotic generosity—he is a close member of William's own clique; for he is the great-nephew of the Confessor; he is the uncle by marriage of Henry I, the Conqueror's son, and of the Countess of Boulogne; and therefore by marriage the great-uncle of Stephen, King of England. He is the nephew by marriage of Emma of Normandy, and she is the sister-in-law of the French King, Henry, and of Adelaide, the Countess of Flanders. Emma stands also in close family

relationship to William the Conqueror's wife. She is her aunt-in-law.

The criss-cross of relationships can be multiplied indefinitely. The whole clot formed one social body, all closely inter-related by marriage and by blood. There are less than twenty names which between them account for all the dynastic movement of the time. They form a compact set of personal interests *with the great Capetian House of Paris for the centre of the whole affair.*

A score of near Capetian relations decide the time

Such were the main actors in the drama about to be played between the private (and warring) covetousness of the Anglo-Danish magnates in England and the increasing influence of civilization and order from Normandy—with Edward the Confessor, virtually a Norman but popular English king, as the moderator between such rivalries.

The King was crowned with solemnity on the Easter after his accession, April 3rd, 1043.

Godwin and his family at once began to exercise their pressure. The very next year (1044) he forced his young daughter, Edith, upon the elderly[1] Edward for wife. Edward may have made a vow of continence—it is very doubtful; at any rate, his reluctance to have Edith forced on him was clear. But the political power of his greatest subject was too strong for him, and Edith became Queen.

Godwin forces his daughter Edith as queen on St. Edward

Godwin's Danish wife had a nephew who was, at that moment, fighting for the throne of Denmark and Norway. This nephew asked for a supply of British ships to help him in his foreign struggle. Godwin supported his outrageous claim. It was disallowed; but the mere making of it showed the power of the Earl, as does the next incident, that of Godwin's elder son, Sweyn, "Jarl" (Earl) of the South Midlands and the Welsh March.

Sweyn (in 1046) had violated the abbess of Leominster. Edward exiled him, and he took to open piracy, raiding the

Crimes of Sweyn, Godwin's son

[1] Elderly for that time and for such a wife: Edward was already in the forties.

English coasts, yet in less than three years he was pardoned. Even here we note the invincible anarchy of these men. Sweyn's own brother, Harold, opposed the pardon. Why? Because to him and to Beorn, his cousin, had been given his brother's vacant revenues. Rather than lose that income Harold urged his own brother's continued exile.

The wretched series continues. Sweyn visited his father Godwin (then at the head of half the English fleet at Sandwich), lured Beorn into his companionship, kidnapped him, and had him murdered. Then he sailed off and took refuge with Baldwin, Count of Flanders: yet the power of the House of Sussex compelled Edward to restore even Sweyn. The one counterpoise to the hopeless selfishness of the magnates was the steady Norman influence—Robert of Jumièges, now Primate; William in the See of London; and the lesser Norman nobles about the court.

In 1051 Godwin and his sons took the occasion of a skirmish at Dover (one of Godwin's towns) between the townsfolk and the men of Stephen of Boulogne (Edward's brother-in-law, who was returning from visiting the English court) to attempt open rebellion. Sweyn, Harold, Godwin himself, raised armies and marched against a king's garrison of Normans in Hereford. But the king's popularity and the respect felt for him by the English masses was too strong for them. They hesitated to engage. Edward, who had gone after the rebels in the west, turned and entered London at the head of a great force on September 21st, 1051. Godwin and his five sons (the "Jarls" Harold and Sweyn, also Tostig, Leofwin, and Gurth) came up opposite to the city, camping in Southwark. They were bidden stand their trial, feared for their lives and fled: Harold and Leofwin to Ireland, Godwin, with the other three (and his Danish wife), to Baldwin of Flanders.

Godwin's rebellion, 1051

In that interval of doubt the chief Normans had prepared for flight, in case Godwin's rebellion should prevail.

For the moment it did not. The group of magnates

fishing for civil war were dispersed. Godwin's daughter, the Queen, was in custody ; and when William of Normandy himself came over to visit his cousin he found order restored. Godwin, from Flanders, attempted a first descent on England and failed. He attempted a second in September, 1052, just a year after his flight, and succeeded. Harold joined him in the Channel. They ravaged the unfortunate English homesteads on the coasts like pirates, as was their wont, and then sailed up the Thames on the 14th of the month. There was no fighting. The two fleets—the king's and the rebels (some 4000 men each)—lay facing each other below London. It was a strange settlement, worked by Stigand, Canute's former chaplain, now Bishop of Winchester, and (though a man of poor parts, beside cunning) his mere presence had some weight in argument with St. Edward's gentle mind. Godwin and Harold were to be received back to court—that decision alone led to the flight of the chief Normans—the Queen, Godwin's daughter, was to be formally reinstated, *but* (such was Edward's sole advantage) Sweyn was to depart and Godwin was to give hostages (including one of his own sons, Wulnoth and a grandson Haco), which hostages were sent to the Duke of Normandy for safe keeping.

at first unsuccessful

he and his son ravage the coasts of England, A.D. 1051

and end by imposing themselves, A.D. 1052

Godwin set to work at once. Since Robert of Jumièges, the Archbishop of Canterbury, had fled in fear of his life, Godwin put Stigand in his place. That great Pope, Leo IX, refused to confirm or admit the monstrous appointment, while the true Archbishop still lived in exile, and Stigand remained a pretender [1] only ; but he achieved what was the grand object of all members of Godwin's party, wealth. For he gathered into his own purse the revenues, not only of Canterbury, but of Winchester also, and (an enormity !) the abbacy revenues of the great monastic houses, Glastonbury,

Godwin irregularly makes Stigand Archbishop of Canterbury

[1] He got a recognition from the false Pope, John of Velitræ, which was worse for his position than if he had had none at all.

the splendour of England, St. Augustine's, Ely, St. Albans. Stigand took all to himself.

Godwin's sudden death, A.D. 1053

Even the sudden death of Godwin on Easter Monday of the next year (April 15th, 1053—it was called by the populace a visitation of God on his crimes, and awful legends arose around it)—made matters no better, for his earldom was handed to his son Harold, and, as may be imagined, Harold immediately provoked civil war, again on a matter of personal income.

His son Harold succeeds to his power

Harold had been given Wessex: the largest in revenue by far of all the earldoms. Yet he was ready to throw England into further misery because he had not been allowed to retain his old East Anglian earldom *as well*—it had gone to Leofric's son Alfgar. Relying on his mastery of the Council, Harold, in 1055, had Alfgar condemned on a charge of treason trumped up against him. Alfgar was outlawed, fled to Ireland, hired a Scandinavian pirate as ally, and, true to the instinct of the few great nobles who were ruining the realm, raided the county of Hereford. There was a drawn fight in Wales, and Alfgar got back his earldom.

and immediately provokes civil war, twice, A.D. 1055 and 1057.

Such madness as the ravaging of England for the sake of two men's competition in wealth was not enough. It must continue. By 1057 Harold was ready to precipitate another ruin. This time because Alfgar had succeeded to the earldom of his dead father Leofric, and so again got revenue which Harold coveted (September 30th, 1057): another civil war, another outlawry, another bringing in of pirates; Alfgar again driven out; again restored by Welshmen and Norwegians. He died and left two sons, Morcar and Edwin.

and has a Welsh war in A.D. 1063

Harold made Alfgar's death an occasion for a great raid into Wales, which he thoroughly harried in 1063, getting the submission of the tribes and sending the head of their Prince, Griffith, to King Edward.

So up to within seven years of the Battle of Hastings the

magnates—Harold especially—continued chaos and war—and the King had no heir.

Who shall succeed Edward the Confessor?

It was now certain that no son would be born to him. Who should succeed? The question was critical, for England needed order and rest if English society were to survive. For generations the Crown of Wessex had continued in one house—certainly since Egbert, after 800, and, by legend, right back to its legendary founder "Cerdic" in the decay of Roman rule, 300 years earlier still. The Danish usurpation had interrupted this succession for twenty-six years, but without dropping a life. St. Edward had succeeded as the son of his father Ethelred, and was in the right line from the half mythical "Cerdic," through the fully historical Egbert. The British blood royal had stood hereditary in Wessex for much more than 200 years: it had intermittently held the crown of all England for over a century—since Athelstan. There was no other such antiquity elsewhere in Western Europe among the new dynasties. Such a precedent urged strongly an heir of the same blood.

The true heir was Edward the Exile

Now the obvious heir was the surviving son of Edmund Ironside, that other Edward who, as a child, had been sent for safety, it will be remembered, to St. Stephen of Hungary. Edmund Ironside had been the elder half-brother of St. Edward the Confessor. *His* son was therefore the half-nephew and closest male relation of the reigning king: a grandson of Ethelred, as St. Edward was the son. The strict modern idea of primogeniture *in government* had not then developed: *that* was a French institution which the Capetian monarchy gradually implanted in men's minds on the model of the immemorial tendency to primogeniture in property. But proximity of blood, hereditary right, a royal stock, were all of them ideas as old as mankind; and when St. Edward the Confessor sent for his nephew Edward the Exile from Hungary, it was with the intention of making him heir. It was a choice suitable to all the traditions of the English.

The exile arrived in 1057. Had he survived to be king it would have been fatal to this island. He was wholly alien, and without any near support, knew nothing of England or the English, or, indeed, of the West at all. He would have been a toy in the hands of the great earls, and notably of Harold. The chaos would have become intolerable, for none would have supplanted a legitimate king.

but he dies after landing, A.D. 1057

Happily for England, he died in the year of his landing, leaving only one sickly little heir, Edgar Ætheling (that is, "Edgar the Royal Heir"), weak in mind and body.

and his child Edgar Ætheling is too young to rule

There remained no other heir with any claim at all. But England had drifted into such a pass that a child—and one with no promise of vigour, and unknown at that—could never have reigned. There remained for the immediate future only two issues: either the fuller aggrandizement of the great anarchic earls (particularly of the House of Sussex), with their contempt of popular good, and their accompaniment of civil war and rapine, *or* the founding of order and security under the still increasing pressure of that high civilization just over the Channel, which had been steadily filtering into the island for a lifetime past. The practical alternative lay between the succession to St. Edward the Confessor either of one of the great earls—Harold, the King's brother-in-law was far the most powerful—or of William, Duke of Normandy, the King's cousin. That was the real issue after 1057.

The alternative is between Harold and William of Normandy

Had St. Edward decided the matter by Will it would have been of great effect. A king's Will counted heavily towards determining a difficult passage of the Crown. No such Will was made.

The Crown possibly promised to both by Edward the Confessor

It is very possible, but far from certain, that St. Edward had pledged his word to Duke William, his cousin, that he should have the throne of England. The thing is affirmed in detail by more than one contemporary witness, but the circumstances and dates are doubtful.

It is equally possible that he made a similar promise to

his brother-in-law, Harold. The thing is affirmed by more witnesses, and is even allowed by some writers who opposed Harold's claim.

What made a capital inequality in the duel—what put Harold out of court in the opinion of his time—was an accident of St. Edward's last year, 1065.[1]

Harold sails for Normandy (1065)

In the early summer of that year, Harold set out from Bosham (a port of his) for Normandy on some official mission. Witnesses of great weight—including William's secretary and historian—say that he was sent to convey St. Edward's message that the Duke should inherit the English Crown. Others (of equal weight but concerned to decry William's claim) say that he came to secure the release of his brother Wulnoth and his nephew Haco, whom, it will be remembered, St. Edward had received as hostages from Godwin after the rebellion, and had sent to be guarded by his cousin in Normandy. This doubt, like that other as to Edward's promise, will never be settled.

is wrecked in Ponthieu

Harold got stranded to the east of the Somme estuary at the mouth of the Maye, in Ponthieu. Guy of Ponthieu held him for ransom, but Harold sent urgently to William, Duke of Normandy, whose boundary was close by, and William insisted on his release. By the ideas of the time, the local lord of the coast had a right to all "wreckage," including the ransom of any magnate cast up. It was a sort of incentive to saving ships and men, like our modern law of salvage, but barbarous and hateful and denounced.

and is handed over to Duke William of Normandy

But Guy, a minor local power, feared his great Norman neighbour, and reluctantly forwent his windfall. Harold was handed over to the Duke's men at Eu, the Norman frontier town, and taken at once to the Duke's court. There he was well entertained, took part in a local expedition into Brittany, was treated as of rank only less than royal. But he was asked to take the fullest possible oaths of allegiance

[1] The date is debatable. Some argue for 1064 or earlier.

to his host. Harold acceded without protest. After doing homage for his lands to William as to the Heir-Apparent of England, he swore to help the Duke to the English throne. He accepted many and costly presents after this public act, and further accepted as a signal favour the release, not of his brother, indeed, but of his nephew. All this accomplished, Harold sailed home towards the end of the summer (1065).[1]

and swears to support William in his claim to the English throne (summer of 1065)

Another brawl in the north (which will be described later) took Harold away from London in the autumn. He did not return till the 30th of November. Three weeks later, on the eve of Christmas, St. Edward was taken ill. He bravely attempted to continue in public, hiding his sufferings, but the sudden attack was too much for his old age, and on the eve of the Epiphany, January 5th, 1066, he died.

Death of Edward the Confessor, Jan. 5th, 1066

On the very instant of Edward's death Harold had himself called King, by a Council which included a gathering of his men in London, and the very next day—on the very occasion of the funeral—had himself crowned, the double ceremony proceeding in that great new Abbey of *Westminster*, which was the chief monument of St. Edward's reign.

Harold has himself hurriedly elected by supporters in London and is crowned the same day

(2) The Brief Usurpation of Harold

The shock to Western Europe and its morals was something our time finds it hard to realize.

Harold was William's liege-man. That was the point. He had sworn personal homage and fealty to William in a large public assembly. It had been an act of the most solemn ritual and official character, performed before all Christendom, and it created what was, in that generation, the most sacred bond between human beings. He had

Harold's moral position before the opinion of Christendom

[1] Here, as throughout these episodes, the only first class contemporary witness is William of Poitiers, the chaplain and secretary of the Norman Court. His account of the oath is detailed and exact. No supporter of Harold denies that the oath was taken.

accepted splendid gifts upon his side as a sequel to the ceremony and the release of a valuable hostage. He had been allowed, under this pledge, to go home enriched and free. The *feudal* process, whereby the direct simple impersonal rule of the Roman Empire with its three services, military, religious, and civil, gradually became a complex of personal relations and loyalties, was now approaching maturity, and was at its fullest vigour. We have seen how it had turned the vast slave population, the basis of society, into Christian serfs; how it was the sanction and discipline of armed forces; how it supported the whole structure of the Occident. But the most awful type of this obligation was the homage rendered by the great to their admitted lords. *That* was the capital sanctity of the feudal world, and a simple repudiation of it sent horror throughout the West. We may conceive a parallel if we imagine some great statesman to-day openly admitting forgery in a document of prime international importance, and pleading necessity, or what not, for his excuse.

Harold shows the weakness of his position

Harold himself testified to the desperate nature of his stroke by the unprecedented character of his immediate acts. Coronation was a sacramental rite of profound significance, the great link between the temporal and the divine in Government; the confirmation of authority by religion. It demanded long preparation and an accepted claim. It was only to be performed with all pomp after due delay. Harold had the thing done at top speed within twenty-four hours, actually mixing it up with St. Edward's funeral.[1]

his precipitate grasping of the Crown

Choice of a new ruler lay with national feudal councils (in England the Witan) in doubtful cases, and more especially with the grave business of a new dynasty: the English Council had fuller precedent and power in this than any other Council in Christendom.[2] Harold had torn up all that

[1] St. Edward was buried at dawn; Harold was crowned at the Mass which followed on that same morning.

[2] The whole of the English past is full of this, e.g. the Witan decides the accession of Edward in 901, of the disputed Edwy, in 955, of Edward in 975,

and got a hurried vote from a scratch group of Londoners and of his own soldiers gathered under his hand—and this while the King lay dying and just dead.

His whole action is that of a man doing something most hazardous and inadmissible, but trusting to confirm it by accomplished power after it was done.

Causes of his failure

He failed, partly because he had thus outraged the moral feeling of the time (thus providing recruits for his rivals and making doubtful his moral support at home); partly because the rival Norman civilization was his superior in organization and power; but most of all through that vice of ceaseless civil war for gain which was native to him and his, and which had been, for now a long lifetime, the curse of England.

Harold and his family start a new civil war

Tostig, Harold's own brother, had been Earl of the North in the last years of Edward. He ruled oppressively. His subjects rose against him, captured his capital of York, massacred his half-Danish guard, and chose Morcar, the son of Alfgar, their former ruler, to be their new Earl. This had happened in October, 1065, the autumn before St. Edward died. Harold had met the rebels, got their claims confirmed by the king, and thus exiled his brother, whom he feared as a rival. Harold had then returned to London, as we have seen, at the end of November, 1065.

His brother Tostig

Tostig flies abroad and calls in foreigners to recover his earldom

Tostig took refuge at the court of Baldwin of Flanders (his brother-in-law), as Godwin had done before him. When St. Edward was dead Tostig took advantage of his brother's usurpation (and consequently weak position) to attempt a reconquest of his earldom. He called in the King of Norway (Harald Hardrada). He promised to support William of Normandy in his claim to the crown.

This last was now making vast preparations for war in support of that claim. The spring of 1066 was filled with

of Ethelred in 978, etc. The necessity of some delay before crowning and the due solemnity and protraction of that sacramental act were also of immemorial usage and taken for granted.

his energy in requisitioning, shipbuilding, levying, arming. He was gathering recruits from all the West,[1] adding them to his own formidable force of Norman knights, and laying down new transports by the hundred. He had sent in his claim and angry protest to his liegeman, Harold, the moment the messenger had reached him with the news of St. Edward's death and Harold's crowning. Harold had answered repudiating his oath, saying it was got by duress, and that, apart from this, the English Crown was not his to deal with, but was elective: that he had been elected.

Meanwhile William, Duke of Normandy, prepares to invade

Tostig got together sixty ships, sailed into the Channel from Bruges, and began harrying the unfortunate English coast farmers and towns after the fashion of his family, as his father Godwin and his brother Harold had done in the past. Then he sailed north, tried to seize his earldom, failed, took refuge with Malcolm, King of Scotland, and awaited the arrival of his ally, Harald Hardrada, King of Norway.

Harold of Sussex, during that summer, was straining to consolidate his precarious position. He had married Morcar's sister, so as to get an alliance with the North. He prepared, on the higher land which backs the flats between Hastings and Beachy Head, to receive the great invasion of William; against which, also, Harold's fleet—a very large one—patrolled the Channel.

Harold prepares for the invasion

By August the Duke of Normandy had his transports ready, and concentrated them off (and in) the little estuary of the Dive, with his enormous host on shore ready to embark. But the wind was a dead noser from the north-east, and nothing could be done.[2] In that same month,

[1] Besides the Normans, William had perhaps half as many again of *Bretons*, and perhaps half as many again of other Northern Frenchmen (Picards and Flanders men) with some few southerners and even Italian adventurers.

[2] The great square sail, on a mast stepped rather aft (direct descendant of the Roman galley) would take the wind just forward of the beam, but could not beat. Why did they thus step the mast aft? For fear of burying the bows. Small craft, of course, could always beat to windward. But it took some generations to develop a rig that would do so, even clumsily, in large craft.

with that same wind, Harald Hardrada sailed for Britain with 300 ships, and found Tostig his ally in Scotland. Toward the September equinox they sailed for the Humber. At the same time William got his army aboard, the wind having shifted west, and was ready to cross the Channel. Even as William set out the west wind rose to a gale, and moved the sea in a great storm. That tempest did two things. It dispersed Harold's patrolling Channel fleet, which was watching along the Sussex coast to intercept William's landing—for, in the face of that gale and its damage, the fleet ran round the North Foreland into the Thames to refit. It drove William's boats headlong up the coast before it—not without wrecks—to take refuge round the hook of St. Valery, at the mouth of the Somme. Meanwhile, up north Tostig had landed with the Norwegian army and king. On September 20th they defeated Morcar's defending force, reached York, and held the North as conquerors.

The equinoctial gale of 1066

Harold's fleet runs for the Thames: William of Normandy's fleet is driven to St. Valery

Tostig lands in the North

When the equinoctial storm broke Harold, down south, had heard of Tostig's landing with the Norwegian. The weather seemed to forbid William crossing. His own Channel fleet, as we have seen, had run for it and was now refitting in the Thames. He had to meet the danger to his throne beyond the Humber. He rode north. The rapidity of his movement is remarkable. He was a great soldier. He himself was in Yorkshire by September 24th. He must have sent before him full plans for concentration, for, by the 27th, he had a very large body of cavalry with which to attack what was certainly a smaller body of dismounted Norwegians and the few English and others under his brother Tostig.

Battle of Stamford Bridge, September 27, 1066

The fight was at Stamford Bridge, 10 miles east of York, up the Roman road. Before it opened Harold offered his brother the earldom—but who should pay the Norwegian king and men their hire? Harold would allow only "7 foot of land for a grave." Tostig and Harald Hardrada and the great mass of their army were killed. Their defeat was due

to the imperfect discipline of those days. An inferior force, and dismounted, they formed a hollow ring to take the charges of Harold's cavalry till it should be exhausted. But they could not be kept to rank; at the repulse of a body of horse the opposing footmen ran out to pursue. The formation was broken, and thereupon its cohesion destroyed. Harold's cavalry charged through the gap, and the remainder of the ring dissolved.[1]

This victory was won by Harold on September 27th. The next day, the storm having abated and the wind gone southerly, William of Falaise set sail from St. Valery; 1000 main transports, 3000 craft in all, small and large, bore 50,000[2] soldiers and all the host of followers, servants, and bearers, to make landfall of Beachy by morning: the Duke's vessel, leading through the night by a lantern at the truck, and the varied rates of sailing stretching out the great armament all across the seas.

William sails, Sept. 28, 1066

On Michaelmas Day, September 29th,[3] William landed at Pevensey; his laggards came up. By that night all were concentrated once more in what was then the large but shallow harbour of Pevensey, to-day marsh and dry land. Harold's fleet was still in the Thames. The passage had been unopposed. Harold's fleet returned in a few days and lay in the offing, but too late. Already Hastings had been seized and the Norman ships both there and at Pevensey were protected by earthworks.[4]

and lands at Pevensey, Sept. 29, 1066

The news of William's landing reached Harold at York in the first days of October. He came south with his accustomed speed. He had certainly ordered some concentration

[1] So the fullest and traditional account of the battle. Several modern historians have made up an imaginary battle of their own, in which Harold had no cavalry. But that is not history, it is fiction.

[2] The best witness, William of Poitiers, gives that number.

[3] Not the 28th. Odericus is conclusive; the A.S. Chronicles confused and inconclusive.

[4] The boats were beached, but obviously in the sheltered water within the long spit which made the low eastern natural breakwater of Pevensey: a rampart across the neck of that spit would defend them all.

at London (no army could have marched from the north at the rate Harold moved). Perhaps certain levies reached him from the south as he left London, and others concentrated in Sussex, but at any rate, he and his immediate command next accomplished one of the most astonishing feats in military history. They covered the distance between London and Battle (presumably by the Roman road branching from Rochester) in less than three marching days.

THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS

On the evening of October the 13th, after this lightning march, Harold and his over-weary command occupied the ridge of what has since been called Battle. What its local name may have been at the time we do not know (it certainly was *not* "Senlac").[1]

William, in his camp at Hastings (which town gave its name to the battle), 6 miles away, recalled the patrols that were out foraging and gave orders for the morrow. His great host started next day, October 14th, at dawn, and before 9 o'clock its columns were deploying at the foot of Telham Hill, opposite Battle, with the sharply rising ground of that ridge immediately before them, and on its summit Harold's line, nearly a mile long. The Norman archers went first in a light line, discharged, and retired. The footmen tested the enemy preparatory to the main attack; at about, or shortly before, 10 o'clock in the morning, the action proper began. William ordered the great mass of heavily armed cavalry to charge.[2] The

[1] The use of the word "Senlac" as a pedantic substitute for the proper term "Battle of Hastings" shows gross ignorance of the time and tongue. Those who use it imagine it to be Anglo-Saxon! It is Gascon--and even so, found in only one authority. It is as though one were to call the Battle of Waterloo "Haysand" because "La Haye Sainte" was a notable point on Wellington's front, and because one English writer had corrupted "La Haye Sainte" into "Haysand." This common error is due to the authority of Freeman working (without acknowledgment) on the great Lingard, the quarry of all our modern historians. Lingard made an error by adopting without criticism a term in Odericus. Freeman, imagining "Senlac" to be an English word, pompously brought it out as a special discovery of his own.

[2] The Norman knights in the centre, the Bretons to the left, the rest to the right, it would seem.

ground is such that they had very little downhill in which to gather momentum. They had to begin the charge at the base of the sharp rise, and this greatly handicapped the advantage of heavy cavalry and numbers. The French knights came up the short sharp bank of hill upon Harold's line, struck, and failed to break it.

Harold's tactics were those regular to the time where a lesser [1] force must encounter a greater, and that a body of heavy horse. They were the tactics the Norwegians had employed a fortnight before at Stamford Bridge, when they had had to meet the superior, and mounted, numbers of Harold. Every man was a-foot: the calculation was to take the shock of cavalry with a sufficient depth of line, and, when it came, to cut down the horses and their riders with heavy battle-axes and confound them with great stones from mechanical slings. No cavalry charge gets quite home against a considerable dismounted line; the horses (or riders) do not reach a steady row of weapons; they swerve and plunge. Such a charge succeeds only by the giving way of the infantry on some sector, and the consequent breach of the whole line. If the infantry line stands, even a much superior force of cavalry, charging again and again, may be so worn down at last that the dismounted enemy can at last counter-attack, but that counter-attack must be exactly timed and all together: premature or partial it would be disastrous. Such was Harold's plan. Its execution needed (as in Hardrada's case) a discipline superior to that of his command.

Early in the action—perhaps about noon—the horse of the less worthy contingents against Harold's right, and William's left began to waver and their riders to fall back. It was far too early for the counter-attack, but the men who had achieved this local success got out of hand, just like the Norwegians at Stamford—they broke rank and pursued

[1] Harold's force held over 1600 yards of line, and must have been dense to withstand heavy cavalry so long. Say 20,000 to 30,000 men at least.

down the hill, with the result, of course, that the line was no longer intact. The knots of pursuers were isolated, and the great mass of cavalry surrounded and trampled them down.

The whole melee resolved itself into incidents of this type, sections of the attacking cavalry getting exhausted, breaking back away down the hill, being pursued by packets of Harold's men, and these pursuers in their turn overwhelmed. It was said later that some or all of these episodes after the first were deliberate feints organized by William. It is extremely unlikely. That generation had not the organization for such elaborate and exceedingly dangerous tricks.

At any rate, whether with or without design, it was this perpetual breaking away of packets from Harold's command that ultimately wore down its strength ; but almost to the end, the gaps were filled and the line, though growing thinner and thinner, still stood. The repeated cavalry thrusts lost heavily (William had three horses killed), they told more and more, but the issue remained doubtful for over seven hours.

The end came a little after 5 o'clock, and was coincident with the death of Harold. He had stood at the left-centre of the line near the great standard a (knight worked in gold), with a brother on either side of him. Each of these brothers had been killed ; he still stood, when an arrow pierced his eye, and he went down on the spot where later arose that high altar of Battle Abbey the ruins of which are still conspicuous.

Before dusk all that was left of the broken army was dispersed in rout, taking to the woods behind the ridge, the greater men finding, it may be presumed, their horses in reserve. Certain of the Norman cavalry pursued through the dusk. One squadron of this pursuit was badly checked by stumbling on a steep falling bank in the mid-right of the position, but it was a chance incident only. Harold's

command, as an armed force, was destroyed. But the fierce and continued action, all men engaged, had lasted nearly eight hours. A quarter of William's army had fallen.

William supped in his tent, pitched where Harold's standard had stood. So ended the Battle of Hastings.

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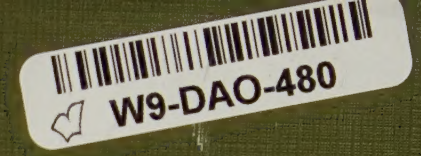
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